

1 | Overview

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The City of Saint Paul in partnership with community stakeholders initiated a planning study to identify transit-oriented development opportunities at two key University Avenue intersections: Snelling Avenue and Lexington Parkway. The goal of the study is to build off the recent successes and major investments along the avenue and identify redevelopment opportunities for a number of key properties that have become run-down, vacant, or outdated. Specific opportunities include the:

- mostly vacant shopping mall on the southwest corner of University/Lexington
- vacant Amoco gas station on the northwest corner of University/Lexington
- building a new community library somewhere at the Lexington intersection to replace the aging existing library
- now-empty bus garage site at Snelling and I-94
- Dakota bank site at northwest corner of University/Snelling

The other key issue studied is how future development can address the alley along University Avenue. Most blocks between University and Sherburne, and University and Aurora, have an alley between residential and commercial uses. For years, neighbors and businesses have struggled to address the frequent problems of dumping, crime, etc. that plague many of these alleys. There has also been occasional tension as businesses, desperate for land to grow, have tried to grow across the alley, while residents tried to protect the residential character of Sherburne and Aurora. One goal of this study was to explore if it is possible to build new housing and/or commercial buildings that would protect and enhance the residential neighborhood and be vibrant on University. While no such development is planned at this time,

City staff who have researched growth trends in other cities believe that there will be pressure for such development in the future. By engaging stakeholders now, we can thoughtfully guide that development rather than react to proposals.

University Avenue is the spine connecting the two downtowns and has historically been the main commercial street of the region. As the region continues to grow and congestion increases, this central regional location is becoming increasingly valuable for residents and businesses. City, community and business leaders are eager to see these critical intersections revitalized with new development that is transit-oriented. Transit-oriented development (TOD) encourages compact, pedestrian-friendly development with a high density of employment and housing within walking distance of a major public transportation stop. Numerous examples of TOD already exist along University Avenue.

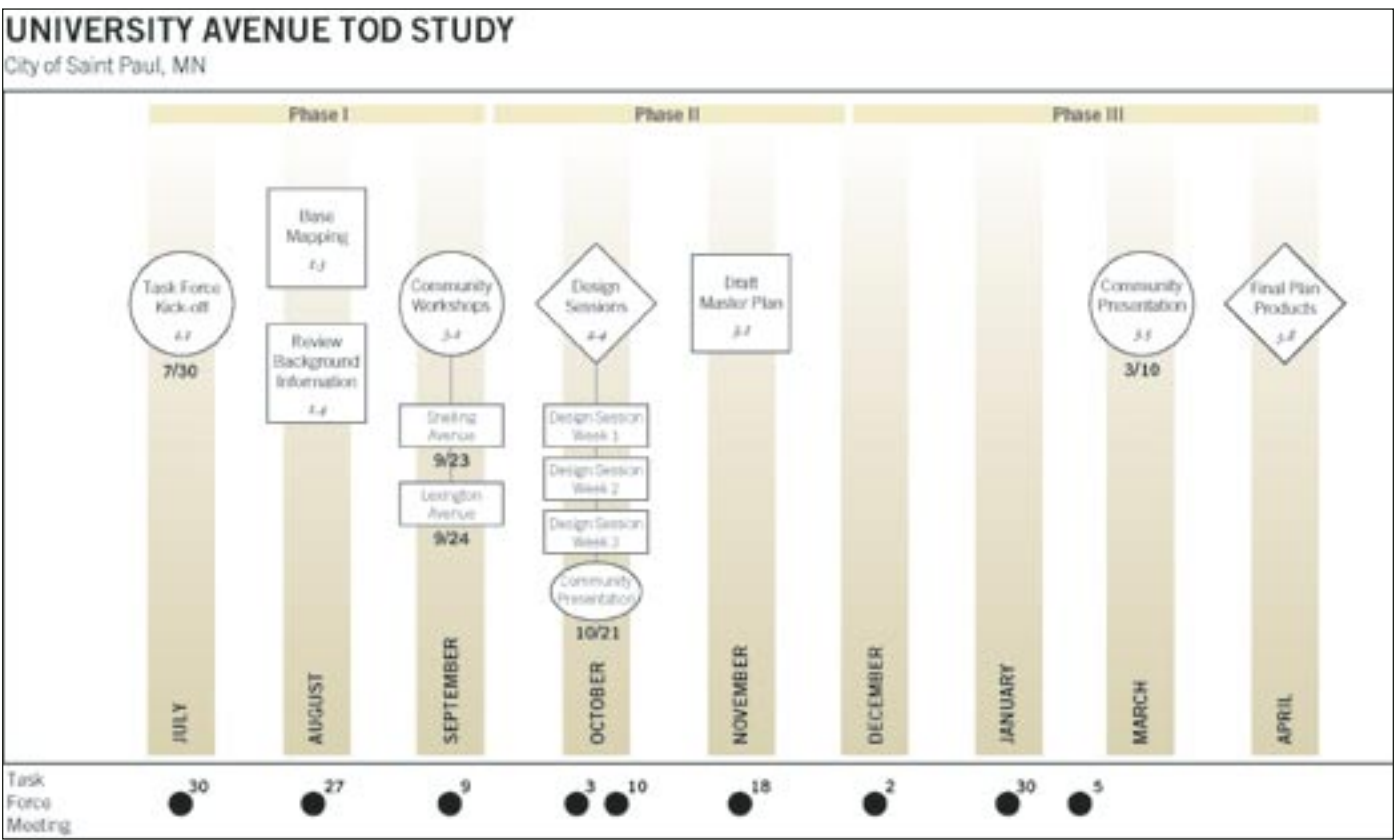


Figure 1. Project Schedule

The primary goal of the study is to provide the City of Saint Paul with a development framework that identifies potential for new development in these areas over the next 5-20 years. The following outcomes of the study will play major roles in achieving this primary goal and also in determining TOD opportunities at both nodes:

- Detailed master plans for both major nodes that incorporate land use, market, environmental and urban design analyses;
- Building prototypes, especially those applicable to those blocks along University Avenue that are half residential, half commercial and divided by an alley;
- A model process for station area planning, to be utilized when major public transportation infrastructure investment is funded along the Central Corridor;
- Community and political support for new, transit-oriented development;
- A redevelopment plan to be adopted by the City Council and the Planning Commission;

A schedule of the major tasks of this study that were structured to achieve these goals is shown Figure 1.

This study does not recommend or require any specific rezoning of properties in the study area and is not intended to render any existing buildings or uses “nonconforming.”

1.2 STUDY AREAS

The two focus areas of this study are Snelling Avenue/University Avenue and Lexington Parkway/University Avenue. They were chosen based upon the existence of vacant and underutilized land and their proximity to an existing major Twin Cities public transportation route (see Figures 2-6).

The boundaries of each TOD study area were determined by city staff before commencement of the study, based on the extent of any transit-oriented development that could occur and its potential impact on adjacent and nearby properties. These boundaries roughly coincide with a one-quarter mile radius around the intersections at Snelling and Lexington, which is an approximate five-minute walk from each



Figure 2. TOD Study Areas

proposed public transportation station. However, these boundaries were adjusted based upon potential development and the existence of established residential neighborhoods and businesses.

The Snelling Avenue TOD study area is roughly bounded by Charles Avenue to the north, Pascal Avenue to the east, St. Anthony Avenue to the south and Fry Street/Roy Street to the west. The Lexington Parkway TOD study area is bounded by University Avenue/Charles Avenue to the north, Oxford Street/Lexington Parkway to the east, St. Anthony Avenue/Fuller Avenue to the south and Syndicate Street/Griggs Street to the west. See section 2.1: Study Area Land Use for additional illustrations and information regarding land use for each study area.



Figure 3. Northwest Snelling area (“A” on Figure 2)



Figure 4. Southeast Snelling area (“B” on Figure 2)



Figure 5. Northwest Lexington area (“C” on Figure 2)



Figure 6. Southwest Lexington area (“D” on Figure 2)

2 | Study Area Analysis

2.1 STUDY AREA LAND USE

2.1.1 General Land-Use and Zoning

Land use in the study area responds to a number of existing conditions and factors including market pressures, zoning, historical use, public transportation routes, traffic, parcel size and ownership, and the unique perspective this corridor has in connecting the two major downtowns. It is not unusual to find businesses that have been operating for 40 or 50 years, in the same location, and others that have been open for only 4 or 5 months. In general the corridor contains a variety of land uses including auto-oriented restaurants, large-scale, big-box regional shopping centers, small-shop proprietors, seasonal merchants, specialty retailers, medical clinics/offices, mixed-use developments, wholesalers, industrial operations, housing, and services. In each quadrant and throughout the study area there is also a wide mix of residential land uses: single family detached, single family attached, rental apartments, units over commercial, and high-rise living. However at key locations there also exist vacant buildings, underutilized lots and undeveloped parcels - reminders that transition and change are currently taking place.

The Midway Shopping Center, Midway Marketplace, and the Target store represent the largest regional shopping area in the city of Saint Paul, occupying the superblocks bounded by Snelling Avenue, University Avenue, I-94, and Syndicate Avenue. There are two sizeable new/used car dealerships in the study area, Whitaker Buick and Midway Chevrolet, both located on the north side of University Avenue.

Zoning: Nearly all of the land fronting University Avenue in the study area is zoned B-3, General Business. Exceptions include the north side of University Avenue between Aldine and Fairview, which is zoned I-1 (light industrial) and the shopping centers at Snelling, which are B-2. There are a handful of lots zoned P-1 or P-D for special parking, including the Spruce Tree Centre and two adjacent lots, a lot at Pascal and Sherburne, and a parking lot on Sherburne Avenue between Snelling and Fry.

2.1.2 Snelling Avenue Study Area

The Snelling area includes the Midway Shopping center, a large concentration of retail uses, the Spruce Tree Centre, and a variety of smaller shops and local businesses such as American Bank, Bremer Bank, Turf Club and Midway Books. A large undeveloped site (about 15 acres) sits just south of the Midway Shopping center which includes the site of the former Metro Transit bus maintenance garage. The exit from the Midway Shopping Center onto Pascal (by Bosa Donuts) is very close to University Avenue. This intersection is often congested and noted for accidents due to confusing merging and turning patterns.

Table 1: Snelling TOD Area Land Use:

Commercial	35.7 acres	60.1%
Residential	10.9 acres	18.3%
Public land*	10.5 acres	17.7%
Religious/charity	2.3 acres	3.9%
Developed Area:	59.4 acres	100%
Public ROW**:	22.6 acres	
Total Study Area:	82.0 acres	

* Public land includes the former Metro Transit bus garage site and the city-owned parking structure adjacent to the Spruce Tree Centre.

** ROW = right-of-way, which includes public land such as streets, sidewalks, parkways, etc.



Figure 7. Snelling Avenue Study Areas

Spruce Tree Centre at Snelling and University is a 120,000-square-foot office building with a 354-space parking ramp. In addition, single-family homes and smaller apartment buildings are found either one block or one-half block north of University Avenue for most of the study area.

2.1.3 Lexington Parkway Study Area

The Lexington area is characterized by a large, currently vacant shopping center at the southwest corner of University and Lexington on the same block as the White Castle restaurant. To the west is the now-vacant 3M Building, ABRA Autobody and Bally’s. A redevelopment opportunity also exists at the northwest corner, the site of an old gas station. Throughout the study area a number of under-utilized and/or undeveloped lots and sites can be found. Additionally, the City plans to build a new Lexington Branch Public Library to replace the existing outdated building.



Figure 8. Lexington Parkway Study Areas

Table 2: Lexington TOD Area Land Use:

Commercial	39.5 acres	57.2%
Residential	24.3 acres	35.2%
Public land*	2.5 acres	3.6%
Other	2.8 acres	4.0%
Developed Area:	69.1 acres	100%
Public ROW**:	28.9 acres	
Total Study Area:	98.0 acres	

* Public land includes the Lexington Branch Library site, BCA property and two city-owned surface parking lots.

** ROW = right-of-way, which includes public land such as streets, sidewalks, parkways, etc.

Table 3: Traffic Counts:

University b/w Hamline/Lexington	31,500
University east of Snelling	25,000
Snelling b/w University and I-94	44,000
Snelling north of University	33,000-35,000
Lexington b/w University and I-94	30,000

Table 4: Bus Ridership:

Metro Transit Bus Route	Daily Riders
16A	16,500
21A	17,500
50	3,400
94	4,000
84	3,900

A significant medical complex near I-94 between Griggs Street and Dunlap Street includes the Central Medical Building, Model Cities Health Center, and a Health Partners clinic/pharmacy. Central Medical is an 80,000-square-foot office tower that may possibly expand in the future. Like the Snelling TOD area, single-family homes and smaller apartment buildings are found either one block or one-half block north of University Avenue.

2.1.4 Blocks between University and Sherburne (and University and Aurora)

Many of the blocks along University Avenue are divided by an alley between commercial and residential uses. For years, neighbors and businesses have struggled to address the frequent problems of dumping, crime, etc. that plague many of these alleys. These problems occur because the alley is largely ignored by the adjacent property owners, except as a service/garage entry point. There has also been occasional tension as businesses, desperate for land to grow, have tried to grow across the alley, while residents responded by seeking to preserve the residential character of Sherburne and Aurora. The results are mixed:

- Many growing businesses have left the area, taking jobs with them.
- Until about 2000, a majority of the homes along the alley were rental. Anecdotal evidence suggests that ownership is increasing.
- Some residential lots were acquired by businesses hoping to grow – but many sit vacant or with poor quality parking lots.

In general, city officials and neighborhood partners have watched this “unhappy coexistence” for decades. However, the overall Saint Paul development dynamic is changing and there are no projections that reinvestment and growth will stop any time in the next decade or two. Out of this new investment is increasing demand to build new housing and commercial space near major public transportation corridors. By looking at development trends in cities similar to Saint Paul, it is clear that pressure for new development along University Avenue will only increase in coming years. At some point, developers will likely acquire numerous adjacent parcels, and propose higher density development than what currently exists (see sections on development 2.2.2 and density 2.3 for explanation).

Clearly it is in the interest of the City and all stakeholders to maintain both vibrant residential and commercial uses. Thus, one component of this study is to identify basic guidelines for new development when it occurs.

2.1.5 Existing Street Network

The street network includes a variety of street types and sizes from the large width of Interstate 94 and the 120-foot width of University Avenue to narrower local and neighborhood streets. University Avenue is the major divider between a well-connected and pedestrian-scaled pattern to the north and an auto-oriented, disconnected street pattern to the south where large, uninterrupted parking lots merge to form super blocks. North-south secondary connections across University are provided by streets such as Snelling Avenue and Lexington Parkway. These streets are complemented by a tertiary type such as Hamline Avenue and Pascal Street that provide additional access to parking lots and areas south of I-94 (see Figure 9).

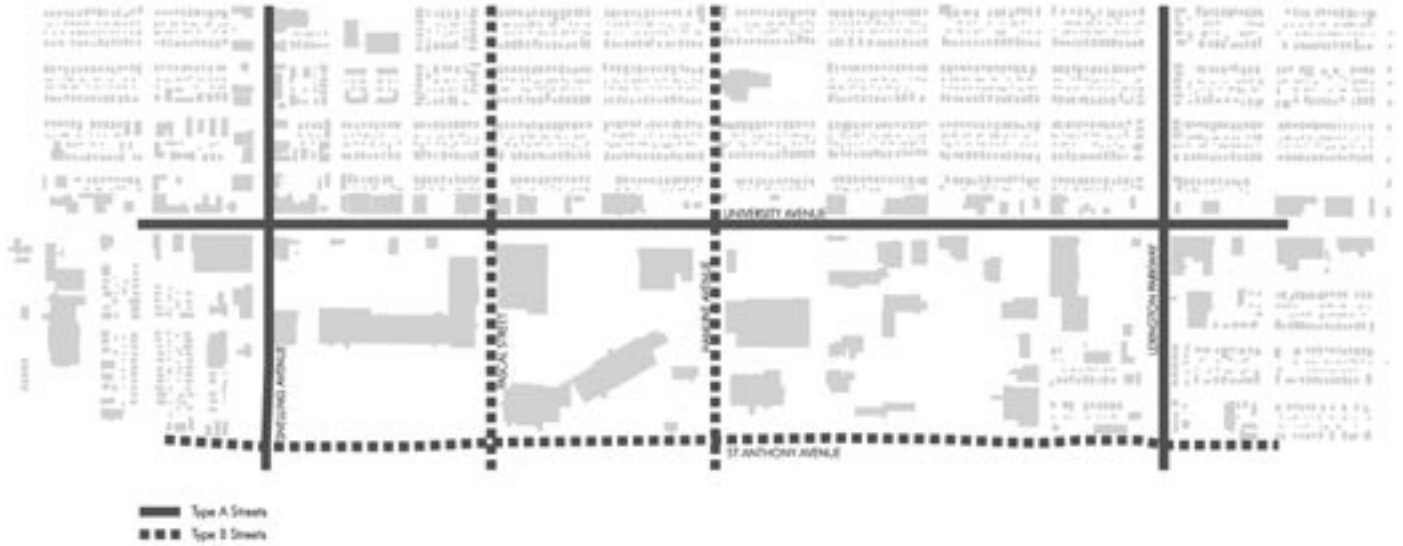


Figure 9. Existing street network: types A and B.

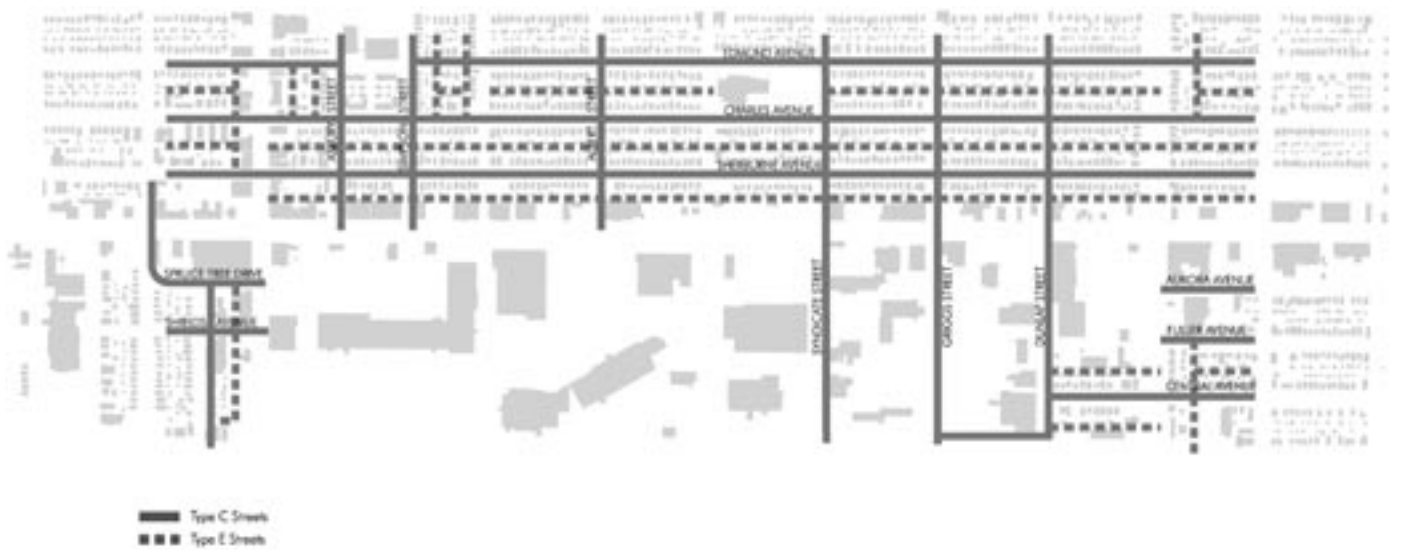


Figure 10. Existing street network: types C and E.

2.1.6 Contrasting Block Patterns

As with the street pattern, the block layout is also a sharp contrast north and south of University. North, along avenues such as Sherburne, Charles, and Edmund a fine grain pattern of blocks is found that helps create walkable environments and livable neighborhoods. South of University large assemblies of land have been converted into regional shopping destinations of single-use, big-box formats. Blocks, essentially, do not exist in this environment (see Figure 10).



Figure 11. Contrasting block patterns north and south of University Avenue.

2.2 MARKET BACKGROUND AND IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 University Avenue Market Study (2000)

The City of St. Paul in 2000 commissioned a market study of University Avenue to provide data about commercial and residential trends and opportunities. The following summarizes the findings and adds updates as appropriate in “[]”.

Commercial Market: The study revealed office lease rates of \$8.00-\$16.00 per square foot. [Since the study ended, the upper bound has increased to about \$18.00 per square foot.] The study found a vacancy rate of 18%, though much of this was due to one large building being mostly vacant. The study suggested that the regional retail area between Snelling and Lexington could support a greater intensity of retail, while the rest of the Avenue has excess retail space.

Market values of commercial buildings have increased substantially in recent years on the eastern end of the Avenue, and retail vacancies are rare east of Victoria. On the other hand, vacancy in the neighborhood-scale retail on the north side of University Avenue in the area between Fairview and Lexington is substantially higher.

[Note: in general the office market has softened as vacancies have increased in downtown.]

Housing Market: In terms of housing, the study found that areas closest to University Avenue have the lowest value housing in the poorest condition, with housing values ranging from \$70,324 in Frogtown/Summit-University to \$150,000 in Merriam Park. The study noted, however, that housing values had increased significantly in recent years. The average housing values in the corridor continued to increase substantially in the last 2-3 years since the study was completed, as much as 25% per year in some cases, as the area has become widely known as one of the few in the region that has had affordable “starter homes” for young families.

Study Summary & Recommendations: In looking at particular sites, the market study found big box and local retail and entertainment to be realistic new uses at the Snelling bus garage site, stating that new institutional and office uses had more limited potential. At Lexington, the study suggested that either big box or an urban village would be possible, while recommending the latter.

2.2.2 Analysis and Impact on Future Development:

As property values rise in Saint Paul, development types are changing. Land costs are rising for numerous reasons. Regionally, land values are increasing in every community. The Twin Cities had very affordable land for many years. We are starting to catch up with national trends. Specific to Saint Paul and Minneapolis, we often have additional costs such as removing existing structures, and sometimes cleaning up contamination. These expenses do not often exist in new suburbs. As traffic congestion worsens in the region, being in the central location of the city will also add value for many people.

The other critical factor impacting development is the rent rate/sales price. Midway rent rates are for example lower than downtown, along Grand Avenue, or many suburbs.

The impact of high land costs and moderate rent rates is significant. No longer is it possible for most developers to build single story buildings that serve just one user. The exceptions are typically regional/national chain stores (gas stations, retail, restaurants).

Multistory buildings are necessary because with low rent rates and high land costs, a developer must find a way to reduce the cost of land. This is accomplished by creating more rentable space. So instead of building a single-story office building, one builds a three-story building on the same amount of land. Of course, building more space has a cost, but developers find the balancing point where the additional rent generated is greater than the construction cost.

Example: Developers generally pay \$10-15,000 for land per unit of housing. The rest of the cost of buying a new house is mostly construction costs and some profit margin. If a developer were to buy 10 older small homes on a block at a cost of \$150,000 each (total cost of \$1.5 million), a simple technical analysis suggests there would be 100 new units. However, this is far too great a density for most blocks. In the process of project review the density might decline through subsidy and other factors. The important aspect is to recognize that the density would have to increase in most contexts if new development is to occur.

This analysis suggests why most new development in Saint Paul is of greater density than what was built the past 50-60 years. The following section provides more information about density and new development.

2.3 DENSITY

2.3.1 Overview

One measure of an area is the density of jobs and housing units. The density of the area creates a certain living environment. On one extreme is a place like New York City where the first floor of many buildings is a retail use with housing or offices above. People can walk outside their homes and find most any basic item or service needed within a short walking distance. The other extreme is a rural suburb where houses are spaced 1/4-1/2 mile apart and all commercial activity is in a town center. One key point is that *density does not correlate with income/revenue*. There are expensive dense areas and poor low-density areas.

2.3.2 Housing Density

A vibrant midwestern city depends on having a mix of housing types. Saint Paul has a large stock of single family homes. One of the challenges facing the Saint Paul housing market is that many people have to leave the city if they want to find alternatives to single family homes. This is especially true for seniors who seek single story homes with nice amenities free of the chores of external upkeep.

TOD principles for a major University Avenue intersection context suggest a typical minimum density of 50 units per acre, though 20 units/acre is more typical minimum as one moves away from the major intersection (See sidebar.)

2.3.3 Employment Density

The density of employees (jobs/acre) also varies. Measurements include the amount of land for the building and parking. Examples include:

- Downtown offices (Lawson Commons) = 750 jobs/acre
- Typical regional retailer (grocery store/home improvement store) = 20 jobs/acre
- Small retail/service businesses (i.e. along University Ave.) = 15-50 jobs/acre
- 2-3 story office building = 70-200 jobs/acre
- Industrial park = 17 jobs/acre

Neighborhood Housing Densities:

- typical Midway block with single family homes and occasional duplex = 9.5 units/acre
- typical Grand Avenue block with mostly apartments and few commercial buildings on one side and single family behind = 19 units/acre
- typical Highland neighborhood with single family homes = 9 units/acre
- new North Quadrant development in downtown Saint Paul on 7th and Wacouta = 80 units/acre
- new Episcopal Homes at Fairview and University = 50 units/acre
- new Emerald Gardens at Franklin and Emerald = 68 units/acre



Figure 12. Episcopal Homes: 50DU/AC

DU/AC = Dwelling unit per acre

Based on the examples cited, TOD principles for a major University Avenue intersection context suggest a typical minimum density of 100 jobs per acre, depending on the type of use, and decreasing as one moves away from the property immediately adjacent to the intersection.

2.3.4 Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

One other way to measure the density of an area is called the “floor area ratio” or FAR. This measurement is the ratio of total building floor area to the parcel area, excluding streets. As the diagram below shows, typical midway buildings have the following FAR:

- single family homes: .5 FAR
- older small commercial/office buildings on University Avenue: 1-2 FAR
- large retailers: .4 FAR

TOD principles for land immediately adjacent to a major University Avenue intersection context suggest a typical minimum of 1.2 FAR.

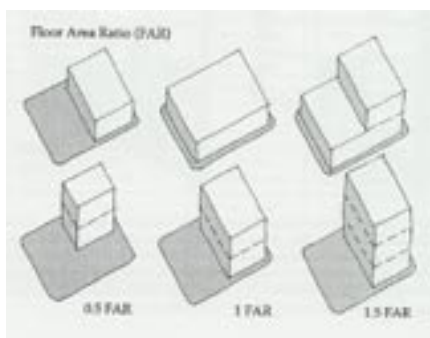


Figure 13. FAR Examples

2.4 TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

University Avenue has the best public transportation service in the region, and many people chose to live and work along the Avenue because it is possible to not depend on an automobile (see table 4). As traffic congestion gets worse in the Twin Cities region over the next 20 years, and as the region grows by a couple million more residents, more people will seek to live and work in areas served by public transportation. Transit-oriented development does not exclude or ignore demands of automobiles, but provides buildings that are easy to access first as a pedestrian and second from a car, as a goal of travel demand management.

One way to make the environment better for both business and transit users may be to integrate transit stops into new buildings at major stops. Mike Koch of Garsten

Travel Demand Management

Travel Demand Management (TDM) encompasses a range of strategies intended to limit or reduce the congestion, danger and pollution created by single-occupancy-vehicles (SOVs). Specifically they are designed for where SOVs are converging on or using urban areas that are high trip generators or that lie between high trip generators, such as the Midway, the University of Minnesota, and the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

TDM strategies include for example:

- computerized ride-matching among commuters;
- incentive programs for transit use;
- marketing and promotion of non-automobile transportation;
- promotion of mixed-use development that over time will attract those who wish to live, work, shop, etc. without the need to drive a car for every trip.

The Midway Transportation Management Organization (Midway TMO) is a partnership helping implement these approaches in the University Avenue corridor.

Perennial Management and MetroPlains Development LLC., managers and owners of the Spruce Tree Centre Building, 1919 University and other buildings said the following:

“There is a high long-term cost of failing to plan for mass transit users. In our case at Spruce Tree, the failure to adequately plan to accommodate bus riders at Snelling and University results today in several direct expenses to the building owners. Costs include: pressure washing the sidewalk twice a week, picking up the trash twice a day, replacing windows because people carve initials in the glass, hiring security to usher people blocking and vandalizing vestibules while waiting for the bus - out into the cold - because they lack a quality, warm, waiting station and paying maintenance persons to push grocery carts back across the street to Rainbow.

For new buildings, proper planning would not only reduce these permanent long term expenses, but make mass transit an asset, thereby increasing the value of the property.”

There are numerous transit-oriented developments already on University Avenue, including the area around the intersection at Raymond Avenue (see Figure 16, the Spruce Tree building at Snelling (see Figure 15), the new Episcopal Homes senior housing at Fairview (see Figure 14), Iris Park Commons across from Iris Park, and others. While the density is higher than single-family homes and single story commercial buildings, most examples in Saint Paul are 3-4 story buildings. The existence of new and old TOD-type buildings demonstrates their demand currently, and that TOD is not dependent on LRT.

Examples of TOD development include national projects such as: Orenco Station (Oregon), Addison Circle (Texas), Phillips Place (North Carolina), and Mockingbird Station (Texas); and local examples include Park Commons (Ecelsior and Grand) in St. Louis Park, Woodlake Centre (66th and Lyndale) in Richfield, and Heart of the City (Nicollet and Hwy 13) in Burnsville.



Figure 14. Episcopal Homes Senior Housing



Figure 15. Sprucetree Centre



Figure 16. Building at Raymond and University

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is designed to:

- Create more livable, pedestrian-friendly communities;
- Include an identifiable center and a prominent public realm;
- Reduce the dependency on use of single-occupant vehicles;
- Increase the convenience of transportation alternatives, including walking, bicycling, public transportation, car pools, and van pools;
- Include a mix of commercial, retail and residential land uses with high job and residential concentration near major intersections;
- Locate buildings and walking areas to promote pedestrian movement, safety, and an appealing environment.
- Regionally improve air and water quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and efficiently use land.

Statistical outcomes of TOD can be impressive. Not only do TOD standards achieve more jobs and housing per acre of land (see Section 2.3), but these translate into more taxes. One housing example is the new development at Franklin and Emerald. The value of the property and buildings went from \$2.45 million to \$70 million. Corresponding taxes generated rose from \$98,000 to \$984,000. Similarly, the proposed Pan Asian Urban Village at University and Dale increases commercial space and adds 50 low-income senior housing units. In this case property taxes are expected to rise from \$57,000 to \$588,000, and over 270 new jobs will be created. The Pan Asian Urban Village was also expected to increase sales taxes significantly; no projections were completed yet pending determination of the tenant mix. On relatively similar size parcels of land, three of the large big-box retailers in the Midway pay property taxes in the following amounts: \$368,000; \$284,000; and \$252,000.

In summary, transit oriented development is focused on two outcomes for the land immediately along the transit corridor:

- Creating a physical environment that is friendly to transit users, pedestrians, and automobiles.



Figure 17. Orenco Station TOD



Figure 18. Wood Lake Centre - Richfield



Figure 19. Miami Lakes Lifestyle Center

- Increasing the intensity of use around major transit stops thereby creating a diversity of commercial and residential space in a neighborhood.

The intensification of land uses is not suggested to be appropriate on the north side of Sherburne.

2.5 Affordable Housing

During the course of the study, concerns were raised about construction of new affordable housing. Many people hold in their minds the image of affordable housing as being tall high-rises full of poor people. That may have characterized some housing built in the 1950s-1960s but not more recent development. Cities across the nation learned that it is better to build mixed income buildings rather than all low income.

To that end, the City of Saint Paul adopted an affordable housing policy that works as follows:

If the City is involved in financing a housing development, we require that:

- 10 percent of the units be affordable to people making not more than 50% of the regional median income, and that
- 10 percent of the units be affordable to people making not more than 30% of the regional median income.

What does that mean? If a new building with 20 units is built and receives a loan or grant from the City, two units must be affordable to a family of four earning not more than \$23,010 and two units must be affordable to a family of four earning not more than \$38,350 per year. The following chart shows affordability standards for households of 1-5 people.

General Principles:

Ideally a development proposed in a TOD area would take into account the following general design and layout principles:

Development hierarchy. An overall development hierarchy demonstrating understanding of TOD principles shall be shown illustrating uses and sites. The relationship between the center, middle and edge of the development should be clearly represented.

Multiple building types. Each TOD development includes a mix of building types that correspond to appropriate street frontages.

Civic uses. Civic uses oriented to the general public are essential components of a transit-oriented development. TOD developments are encouraged to include civic uses.

Open space. Open space integrated in residential and commercial areas is a necessary component of a TOD development. These areas may serve as areas for community gatherings, landmarks, and as organizing elements for the neighborhood. Open space may include squares, plazas, greens, preserves, parks, trails and greenbelts.

Streets and alleys. A TOD should be pedestrian oriented. To accomplish this goal, street pattern and design is used to reduce vehicle travel speeds and encourage pedestrian activity. An interconnected network of streets and alleys is encouraged. Sidewalks and paths are required and shall be designated on a development plan. Streets should conform to the Street Types as defined in section 4.2.

2002 Affordability Standards based on Median Regional Income

Household Size	30%	50%
1 person	\$16,110	\$26,850
2 people	\$18,420	\$30,700
3 people	\$20,700	\$34,500
4 people	\$23,010	\$38,350
5 people	\$24,840	\$41,400

The impact of these wage standards translates into the cost of housing people can afford to buy or rent.

- For a family of four at 30% of median income (\$23,010), their affordable rent rate is \$575 per month and purchase price on a home is \$73,500.
- For a family of four at 50% of median income (\$38,350), their affordable rent rate is \$958 per month and purchase price on a home is \$122,600.

Thus all the rest of the units are at market rate, which is a cost higher than these figures.

3 | Community Involvement

3.1 GENERAL PROCESS

To help facilitate and lead the planning process, a **task force** was established by the Saint Paul Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is a board of Saint Paul residents appointed by the Mayor to advise the City Council and Mayor on planning-related issues. The task force has representation from the neighborhood organizations along University Avenue, University Avenue businesses, elected officials, and a couple of non-profit organizations located on the Avenue. [See appendix 1]. The organizations selected their own representatives. The task force members' role is to engage neighborhood residents and business colleagues in this process. Additionally, the citizens on the task force will ultimately recommend a plan based on the input they have received throughout this process. The plan will be reviewed by the Planning Commission, including a public hearing, as well as the City Council.

3.2 WORKSHOPS

In late September 2002 two community workshops were conducted on University Avenue that focused on the TOD study areas at Snelling Avenue and Lexington Parkway (see Figure 11). A primary goal of these workshops was to “kick-off” the participation and planning process by utilizing small group formats to facilitate discussions about goals, issues and local values. Participants were asked to respond to four questions which were then prioritized using the “Dot-mocracy” technique (see summaries below). These workshops were structured to focus on the issues the community members are most concerned about and to guide the initial design thinking of the consultant design team.



Figure 20. Community workshop

3.2.1 Snelling Avenue Workshop Dot-Mocracy Results

See Section 3.2.3 for a list of the questions asked and a summary of the top response themes for the Snelling Avenue workshop Dot-mocracy workshop. Approximately 100 members of the community centered on the Snelling Avenue/University Avenue node were in attendance and participated in the workshop process. It was clearly articulated that members of the community were committed to preserving the single-family neighborhood north of the alley between University and Sherburne Avenues. Other strong themes that arose from the Dot-mocracy process were the desire to reduce crime in the area and to clean it up, and also to preserve and promote locally-owned independent businesses. Please see the list in Section 3.2.3 for other top responses.

3.2.2 Lexington Parkway Workshop Dot-Mocracy Results

See Section 3.2.3 for a list of the questions asked and a summary of the top response groups for the Lexington Parkway workshop Dot-mocracy workshop. Over 60 members of the neighborhoods surrounding the Lexington Avenue/University Avenue node were in attendance and participated in the workshop process. Not unlike the Snelling workshop of the night before, community members stressed the importance of their homes and commitment to preserving their single-family neighborhoods. In addition, the Lexington area community members also stressed the significance of the Lexington branch library to the neighborhood and the need to keep small businesses in the area. Other themes included the elimination of vacant and underused properties and the desire for streetscape/greenspace improvements that promote a vibrant and multi-use environment (again, please see section 3.2.3 for additional responses).

3.2.3 Overall Dot-Mocracy Results

Snelling Area Dot-Mocracy Results

Q1: Identify a favorite place or building in your neighborhood and tell us why.

- My house (41%)
- Independent businesses (11%)
- Borders Books (7%)
- Turf Club (7%)

Q2A: Name one thing you would like to change about the Snelling/University area.

- Reduce crime (31%)
- Build light rail transit (8%)
- Parking (8%)

Q2B: Name one thing that should not change.

- Keep homes (45%)
- Local/convenient businesses (21%)
- Neighborhood/community (8%)

Q3: List three ways new development and investment might improve the alley area north of University.

- Decrease crime (22%)
- Clean up (19%)
- Preserve single family homes (15%)

Q4: In 20 years University Avenue, as part of the larger region, will be a different place; describe your idea or vision of how it might be different or the same.

- Safe area, less crime (19%)
- My house will be there (16%)
- Keep current feel/energy (8%)
- Lots of small businesses (7%)
- LRT on the street (7%)

Lexington Area Dot-Mocracy Results

Q1: Identify a favorite place or building in your neighborhood and tell us why.

- Library (26%)
- My home (24%)
- Ginko's/Andy's Garage (10%)
- Dunning Recreation Center (8%)

Q2A: Name one thing you would like to change about the Lexington/University area.

- Add small, local businesses (22%)
- Eliminate vacant/run-down properties (21%)
- Decrease crime (11%)

Q2B: Name one thing that should not change.

- Keep single family homes (29%)
- Keep small businesses (20%)
- Parkway atmosphere (13%)
- Friendly, connected neighborhood (12%)
- Keep library (12%)

Q3: List three ways new development and investment might improve the alley area north and south of University.

- Greenspace/streetscape improvement (30%)
- Clean/maintain alley (17%)
- Bus/transit service (11%)

Q4: In 20 years University Avenue, as part of the larger region, will be a different place; describe your idea or vision of how it might be different or the same.

- Vibrant, multi-use and attractive (33%)
- No light rail (15%)
- LRT, efficient mass transit and buses (14%)

3.3 SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL INPUT (POST DOT-MOCRACY THROUGH FEBRUARY 2003)

In addition to the Task Force meetings and community workshops, there were numerous meetings with community and business organizations, discussions with citizens who submitted input, and interviews of many property owners. University UNITED also provided resources to hire consultants to work with the Hmong and Somali communities. This effort to meet with a variety of stakeholders has been ongoing throughout the planning process. The task force used input from all these sources to shape the recommendations.

In November a subsequent community workshop was held to discuss the draft concepts that arose out of the input and research conducted to date. Based on feedback through early-November, a draft framework was written and released in mid-November. Comments on the draft framework were significant. Key issues surfaced and revisions were recommended including:

- The framework needs to provide more market background, analysis of existing conditions, and feasibility analysis of possible concepts;
- The framework stimulated significant discussion about the “alley” issue. Numerous stakeholders felt the study failed to solve the problem leaving it basically “as is”. Others felt that the framework succeeded by leaving conditions alone. Some felt that discussion was limited by the lack of a clear concept such as a building prototype; with a model people could determine if it would strengthen both the residential and commercial neighbors.
- The framework should include more scenarios for the library.

3.4 STUDY ASSUMPTIONS

Based on the input of stakeholders and research the following assumptions were used as a foundation from which to begin formulating design alternatives.

1. University Avenue will continue to evolve as a public transportation corridor. Traffic congestion will continue to increase in the region. As congestion worsens on I-94, traffic will increase on University Avenue. As a result of increased congestion, demand for transportation alternatives will also increase.
2. Land may continue to increase in value, making surface parking lots more difficult to justify from an investment perspective.
3. More housing and a variety of housing types will be needed to meet a growing market.
4. The Midway is and will remain a major employment center.
5. People, as opposed to cars, buildings, etc. are the most important consideration in the planning and development process. This means that planning will put more emphasis on what is important for a quality environment for people (convenience, access, aesthetics, etc.) as opposed to the perfect design for cars, or the perfect location/setting for a building to show off its architecture.

3.5 STUDY GOALS

The goals were derived from the community workshops and supplemental interviews and served as a guiding framework for the remainder of the Framework. They are not in a ranked order.

Overarching: Improve and strengthen the Midway area.

Maintain and strengthen the established neighborhoods, and local and regional businesses. Improving the area includes:

- Removing blighting influences
- Creating new development that enhances the commercial and residential environments

1. Increase the volume and variety of housing types, prices, and choices

A variety of housing types, prices, and choices is critical for a diverse, vibrant neighborhood.

- Single family
- Multi family
- Single and multi level units
- Rental and ownership

2. Increase Jobs, Tax Base and Economic Development

An increase in economic activity, jobs and the tax base directly contributes to the economic health and vibrancy of the community, city and region. This framework seeks to maintain and enhance the viability of commercial activities.

- Increase property and sales tax base
- Increase customers and vitality
- Maintain and strengthen the regional center and provide opportunities for new businesses
- More employees/jobs per acre

3. High Quality of Life (see Figure 22)

In addition to strong housing and commercial activities, a high quality of life, from a land use and planning perspective, requires places for people. The means to achieve this include:

A. **Prominent Public Realm** (see Figure 23) A prominent public realm is essential to maintaining and increasing property value and quality of life. *“Public realm” includes not only publicly owned property, but also publicly used spaces.* Components include:

- Parks
- Open spaces and plazas
- Civic places
- Paths/sidewalks
- Streets
- Boulevards



Figure 21. Variety of housing types, prices and choices



Figure 22. High quality of life



Figure 23. Prominent public realm

B. **Clear, Connected Patterns** (see Figure 24) Clear and connected patterns provide and enhance the ability of places to be safe, accessible and allow a number of options for people to move about the community. Components include:

- Streets
- Blocks
- Pedestrian and bicycle paths
- Public transportation systems

C. **Mix of Building Uses and Types** (see Figure 25) In light of the Midway's urban, transportation corridor environment, a high quality of life will also be achieved by furthering the existing pattern of a mix of building uses and types. A mix of building uses and types provides variety, choice and activity to a place, encourages a more efficient use of land, transportation, and infrastructure, and may reduce auto travel demand. A mix need not be achieved in each building but within a block or two development area. Components include:

- Residential
- Commercial and retail
- Office
- Mixed-use
- Public and Civic (i.e. library, place of worship, community center, etc.)

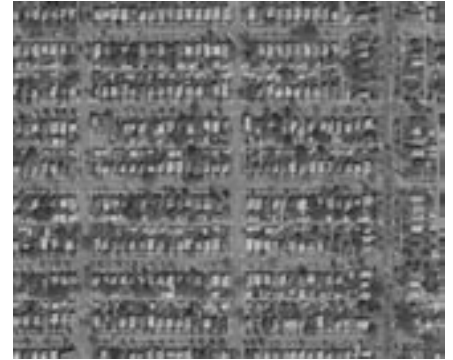


Figure 24. Clear, connected pattern



Figure 25. Mix of building uses and types

4 | Development Framework

4.1 Block Pattern and Public Realm Framework

The foundation of transit oriented development design begins with the block and street pattern. At this most basic level, the framework is completely flexible toward the marketplace and does not determine the land use. Additionally the framework inherently contains physical dimensions that are comfortable for people. An excellent example of this type of block pattern can be found north of University Avenue where there is a simple pattern of street connections and block sizes. Ideally this pattern (see Figure 26), if lifted up and placed over the study areas, would establish a successful foundation. This is not entirely possible but illustrates the first main design proposal for two study areas – a clear, connected pattern of smaller blocks and streets that emphasize a high quality public realm.

One possible infrastructure change to create some of this pattern would be an east-west connection (see Figure 27). This new connection may have a significant landscaped character and should address how storm water run-off is treated.

Some positive characteristics and opportunities that could be included in and promoted by new “streets” include:

- A more defined block pattern
- Enhancement of the public realm
- Improved traffic circulation
- Greater and safer movement for pedestrians and cyclists
- Provision of more developable street frontages.

“Kit of Parts”

When envisioning new development, a framework is put together. Much like creating a house, one starts with a foundation, then a frame, then the shell that is functional and aesthetically pleasing. Section 4 explains the components of a TOD Framework. All together, these components create a “kit of parts” that can be applied to new development.

- Street Types
- Street Frontages
- Building Types

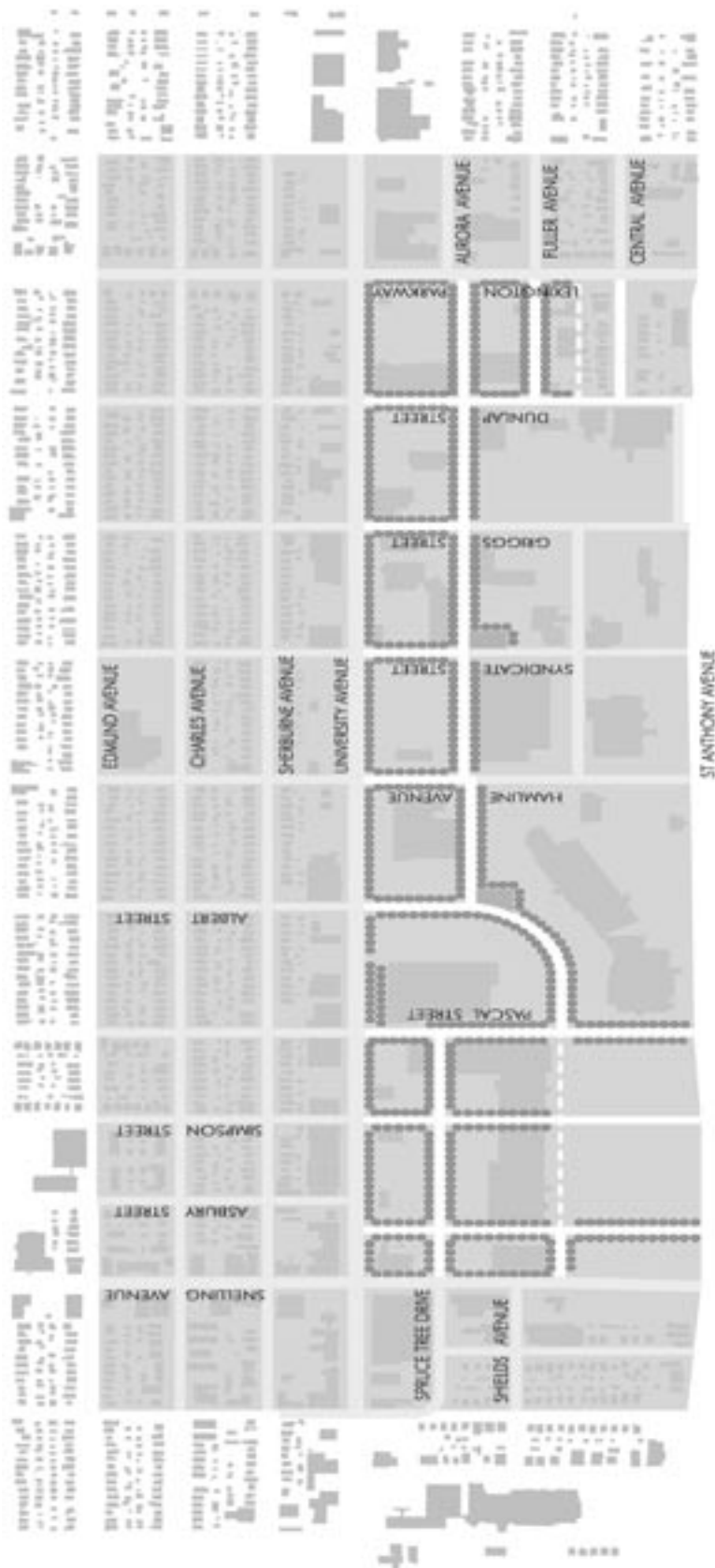
4.2 STREET TYPES

The street types illustrated within this framework are described in detail in the following plates, which list the specifications for each street type. Street types should be designated on any development plan.

From an urban design perspective, people may consider streets as outdoor rooms. The goal of design is to create an appealing “room.” These “rooms” are shaped/framed in by the frontages or facades of buildings that face the street. As such the architecture of a building (e.g. windows, entries) impacts the public space as do sidewalks, lighting, boulevards, and tree planting.

4.3 STREET FRONTAGES

The frontage types are graphically defined here to illustrate a variety of options. The benefit of a good frontage is that if it is combined with appropriate street types, the use of the building is less important. Concretely, a well-designed building can be either office or residential and have the same feel overall. The result of focusing on frontages is the creation of a place that accommodates a variety of uses and users.



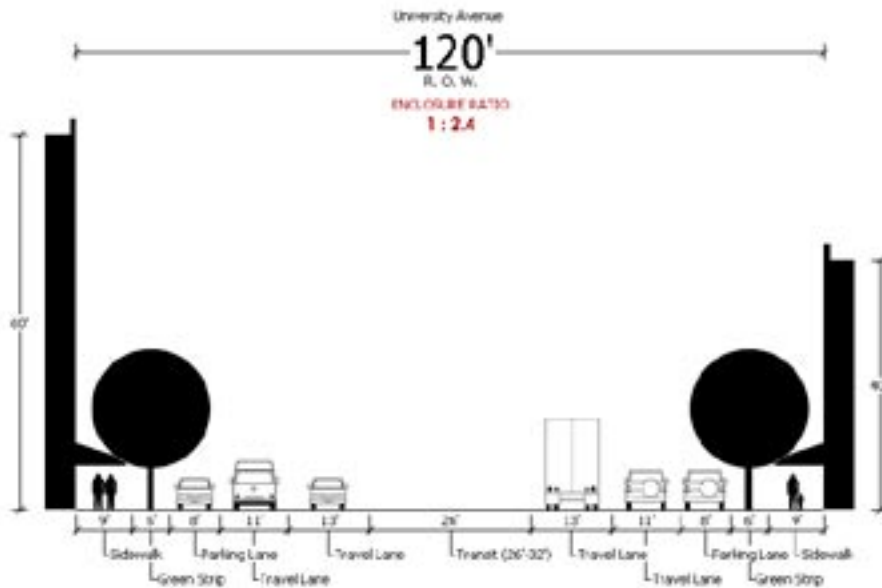
Index of Street Types:

- 4.2.1. Type A: University Avenue16
- 4.2.2. Type A: Lexington Parkway17
- 4.2.3. Type B: Hamline and Pascal18
- 4.2.4. Type C: East-West Connector19
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- 4.3.2. Doorway Frontage.....25
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Figure 28. Public Realm Framework



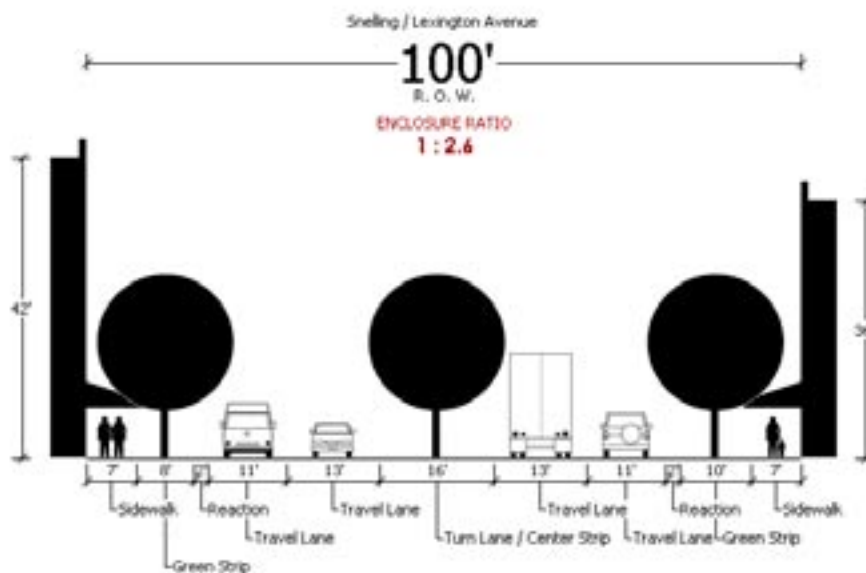
4.2.1. TYPE A STREET

University Avenue



- 120 feet Right-of-Way Width
- 84 feet Pavement Width (total)
- 9 feet Sidewalk Width (both sides)

- Street trees at 20- to 30-foot intervals.



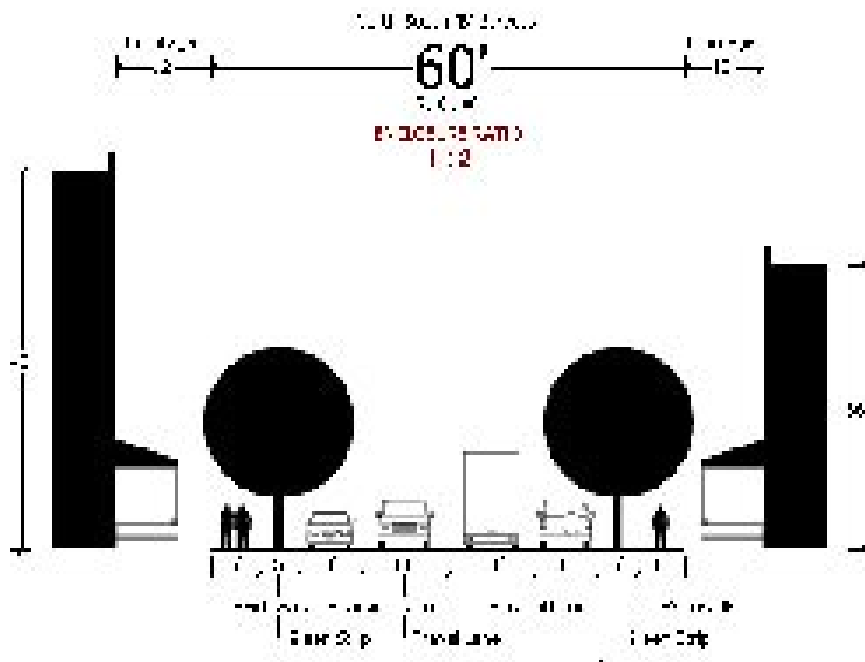
4.2.2. TYPE A STREET

Lexington Parkway



- 100 feet Right-of-Way Width
- 26 feet Pavement Width (each way)
- 7' Sidewalk Width (both sides)

- Street trees at 20- to 30-foot intervals.



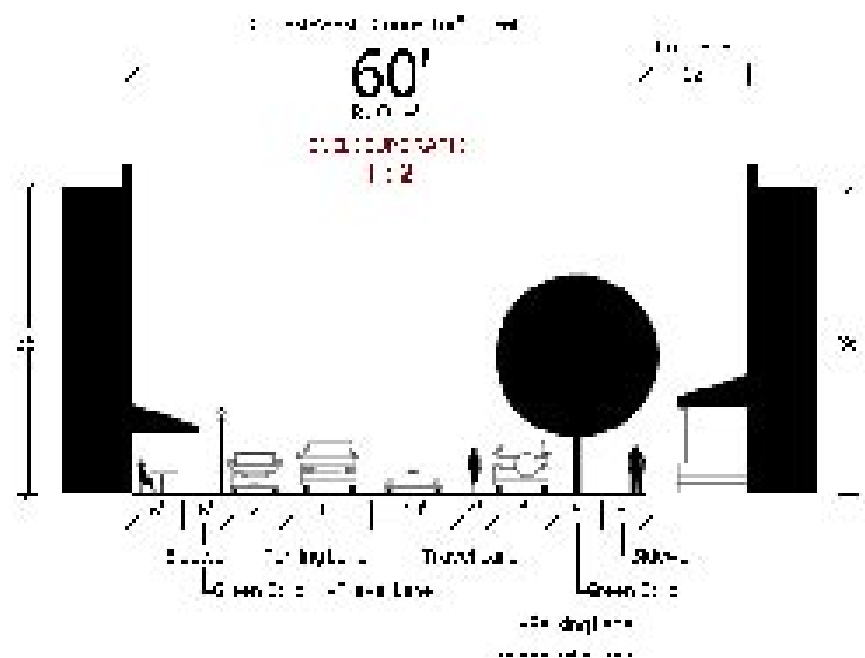
4.2.3. TYPE B STREET

Hamline and Pascal



- 60 feet Right-of-Way Width
- 38 feet Pavement Width (total)
- 6' Sidewalk Width (both sides)

- Street trees at 20- to 30-foot intervals.



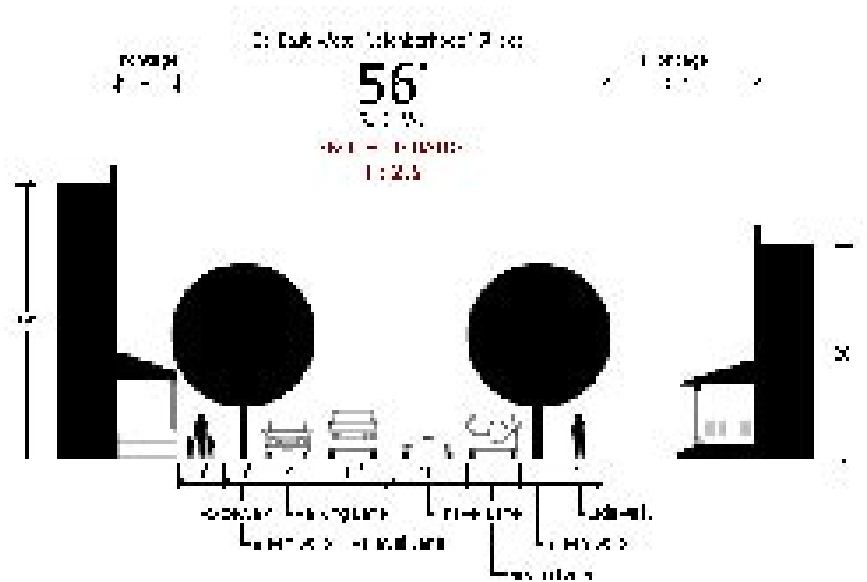
4.2.4. TYPE C STREET

East-West Connector



- 60 feet Right-of-Way Width
- 38 feet Pavement Width (total)
- 5' - 6' Sidewalk Width (both sides)

- Pavement width includes a 4-foot regional bike lane in each direction
- Street trees at 20- to 30-foot intervals.



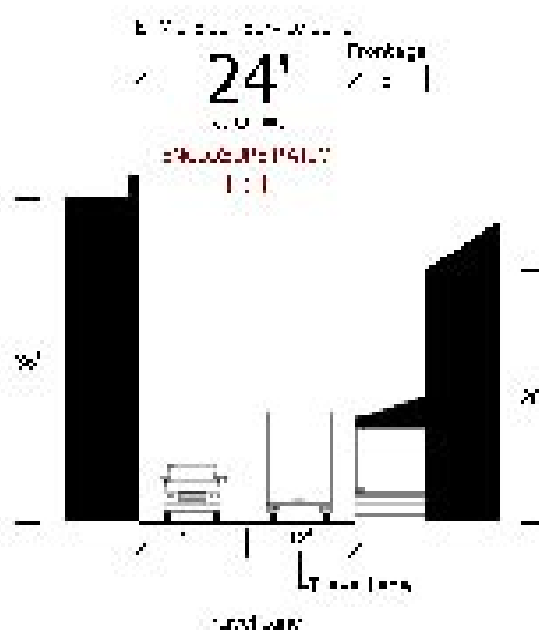
4.2.5. TYPE D STREET

Neighborhood Street



- 56 feet Right-of-Way Width
- 34 feet Pavement Width (total)
- 6' Sidewalk Width (both sides)

- Street trees at 20- to 30-foot intervals.



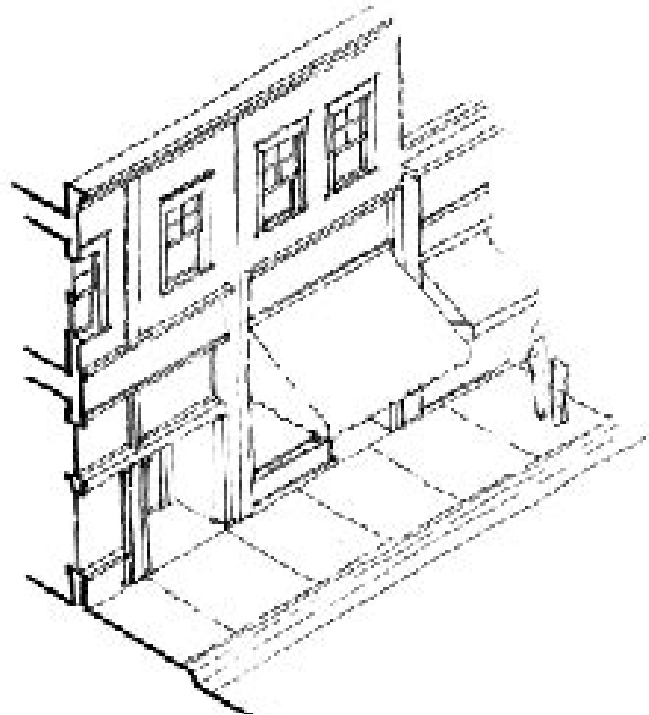
4.2.6. TYPE E STREET

Alley



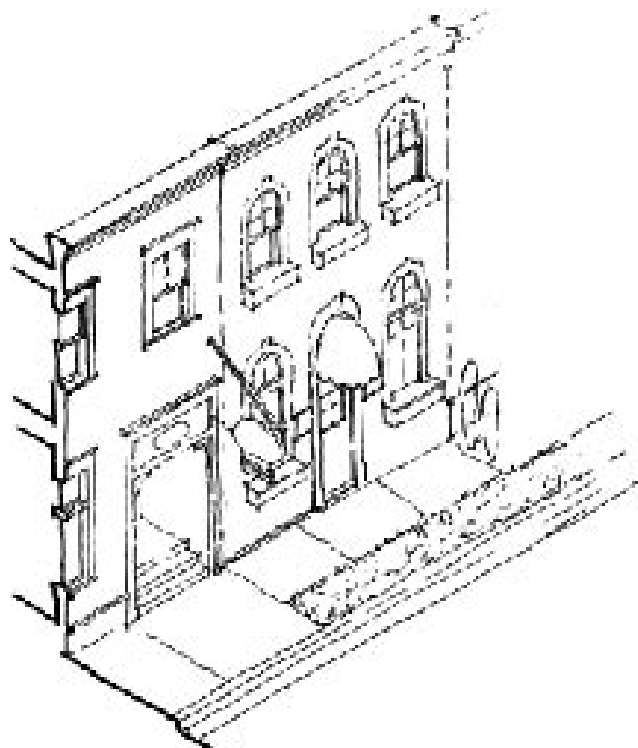
- 24 feet Right-of-Way Width
- 24 feet Pavement Width (total)
- 8 feet Frontage Width

- Includes one lane of traffic each way



4.3.1. FRONTAGE TYPE 1

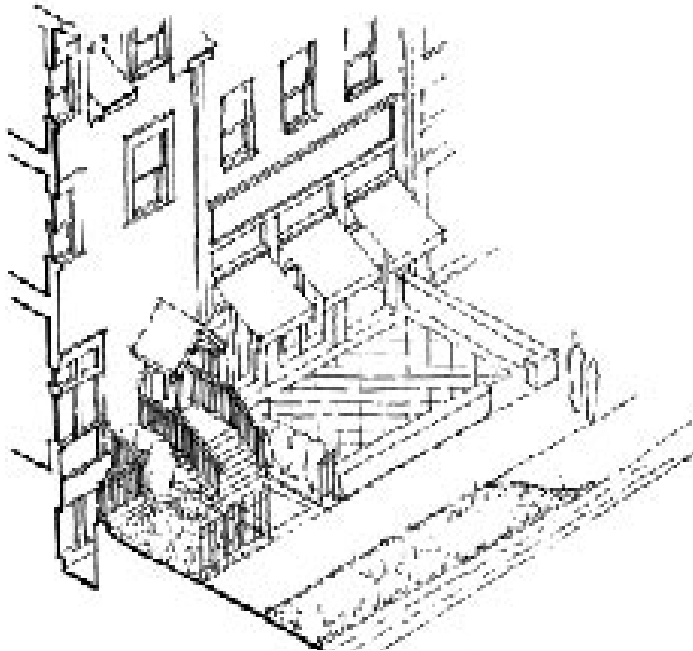
Shopfront



4.3.2. FRONTAGE TYPE 2

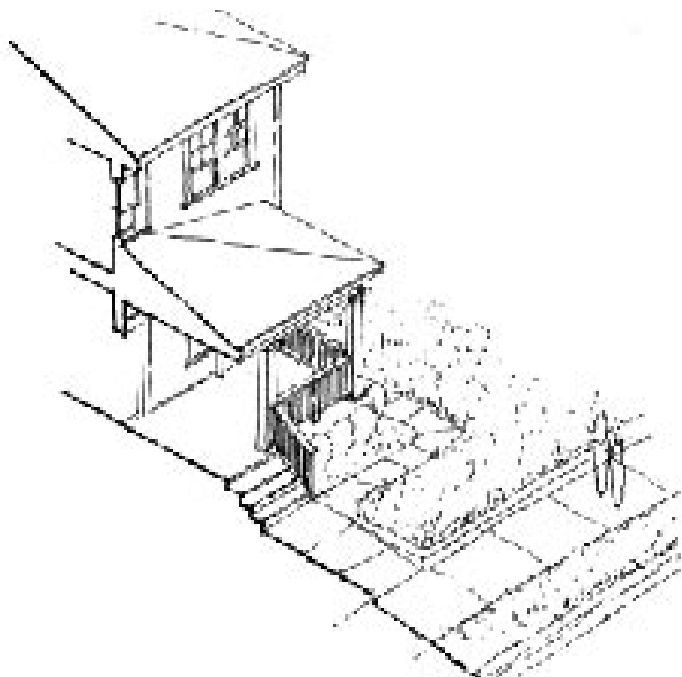
Doorway





4.3.3. FRONTAGE TYPE 3

Forecourt/Dooryard



4.3.4. FRONTAGE TYPE 4

Porch



4.4 BUILDING TYPES

Building type standards may guide the use, placement, height, and size for development of blocks and parcels. The building types shown are for a range of uses including: mixed-use buildings, small/large apartments/condominiums, attached townhouses, live-work units, commercial buildings and other types as needed. Examples for each building type are illustrated. “Big-box” building types (e.g., Target, Cub, etc.) are not included because they are known and understood. It is important to note that many rather large buildings can fit within the formats below.



Building Type I:
Flex Office

- Office uses over ground-floor retail



Building Type IV:
Rowhouse/Townhouse

- Attached for-sale or rental units; separated vertically



Building Type II:
Flex Residential

- Apartment units over ground-floor office/retail



Building Type V:
Attached Single-Family House

- May be vertically or horizontally separated



Building Type III:
Apartment

- May be for-sale or rental; parking under building



Building Type VI:
Parking Building

- Parking ramp articulated as building

5 | Snelling Development Concepts

The Snelling/University intersection has obvious and subtle development opportunities. The obvious include the now vacant bus garage site along St. Anthony and the adjacent land owned by the shopping center. The less obvious development opportunities include developing land that is currently underutilized parking. If suggested road changes occur, new development opportunities may arise to bring in more retail/commercial uses. The overall strategies for the Snelling/University Intersection include:

- intensification of commercial uses
- creating clearer patterns of movement for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycles

The following ideas are best articulated in the text, not in the drawings. It is important to note that the framework sets forth broad goals, allowing the market sufficient flexibility to work efficiently.

Midway Shopping Center:

The development of Midway Shopping Center will occur in phases over time as opportunities arise. The suggested development scenarios for the Midway Shopping Center have the following goals:

1. Improve automobile and pedestrian movement patterns – specifically:
 - create clearer, easier to navigate patterns of movement, preferably more of the standard block size in scale;
 - solve the problems at the automobile entrance on Pascal near University, preferably by moving the drive south as redevelopment of the center occurs;
 - create safe pedestrian and bicycle paths through the center to transit stops;

- insure new patterns help make easy connections into the Midway Marketplace, specifically looking at how traffic can move east and west through the entire regional shopping area;
 - create a high quality public realm that enhances the value of the area.
2. Develop the vacant land south of the shopping center to create the highest number of jobs and commercial activity possible and strengthen the regional commercial center. Specifically, the goal is to support creation of transit garage and hub, however if a bus garage is not feasible, explore the concepts such as those recommended by the community in the Midway master plan for an intensification of use. These included offices, hotel, movie cinema's and other retail functions. Residential uses are not preferred here at this time due to the commercial nature and isolation caused by the interstate, Snelling, and University.
 3. Create a strong visual element at Snelling and St. Anthony that functions as a signature gateway to the Midway area. The structure should be of scale and quality that matches the area.
 4. Maintain the major commercial users in the center and add others as possible. Specifically, as the market changes, seek to capture the value of University and Snelling Avenue frontages by increasing the intensity of use along the avenues, balancing the need to maintain the value of property deeper in the block.
 5. Consider moving eastward the major transit stop from Snelling. This places the stop more centrally within the commercial district and alleviates potential traffic congestion issues at Snelling.
 6. Encourage adaptive reuse of buildings that maintain the historic and eclectic character of the area.

The task force also believes that it may be appropriate to explore the feasibility of strengthening the regional shopping center between Snelling and Syndicate that includes Midway Center, Midway Marketplace and the Target Store. With coordinated planning and design, the character of the area might be substantially improved for shoppers and the surrounding community. Structured parking and improved transit service could free land for significant new commercial uses and employment. Housing may be appropriate in some areas as intensification occurs in the area. This exploration/concept was beyond the scope of the study.

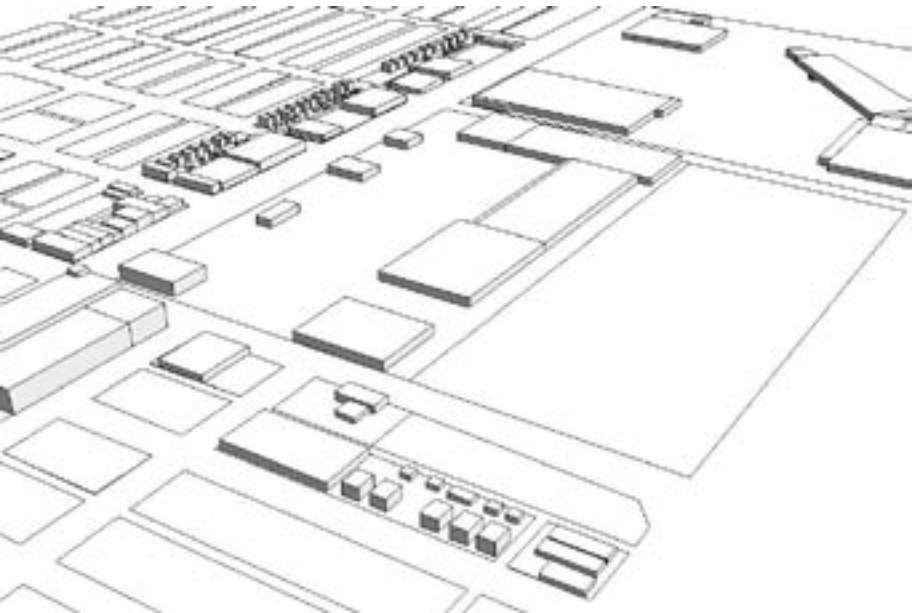
The northwest corner of Snelling and University is also available for new development. Community goals for the new development include:

- Signature building built at the corner of a scale that supports the style of the area (2-3 stories at the street, possibly more if upper levels are stepped back from adjacent streets);
- Parking lots better utilized and more aesthetically pleasing along Sherburne;
- Possible inclusion of the furniture store located along Snelling north of the bank.

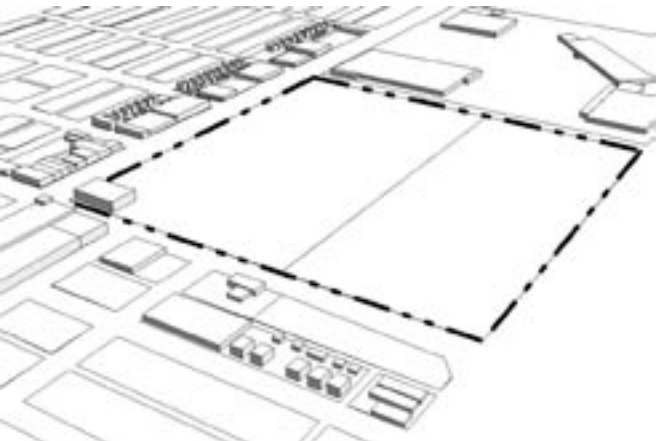
Development Options for Snelling

Two options are drawn to show the variety of ways the goals can be achieved. Both options suggest that over time, property along University and Snelling may increase in value to the point that property owners will find greater value in higher intensity uses. Both show a clearer street pattern within the center which is to be phased-in as appropriate during normal cycles of remodeling/upgrade.

Snelling Area
EXISTING CONDITIONS



EXISTING BUILDING MASS



EXISTING BLOCK DIAGRAM

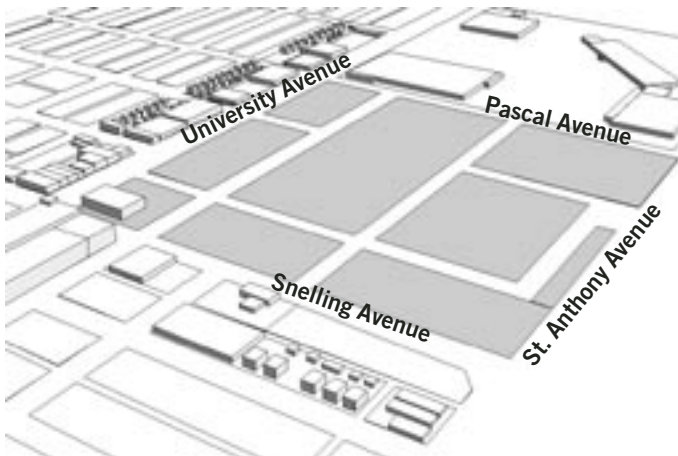
Existing Uses:

Midway Shopping Cntr	284,500
Tenant Shops	4,225
Perkins	6,000
McDonalds	3,500
American Bank	25,000

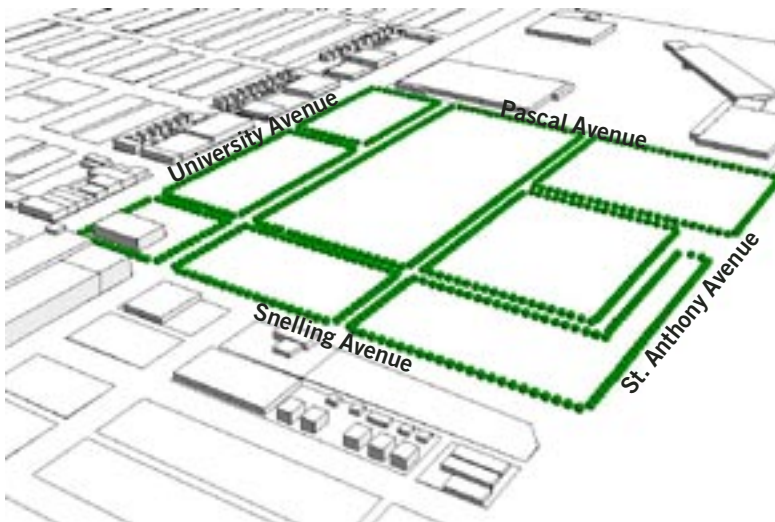
323,225 GSF*
(estimated)

* Gross square feet

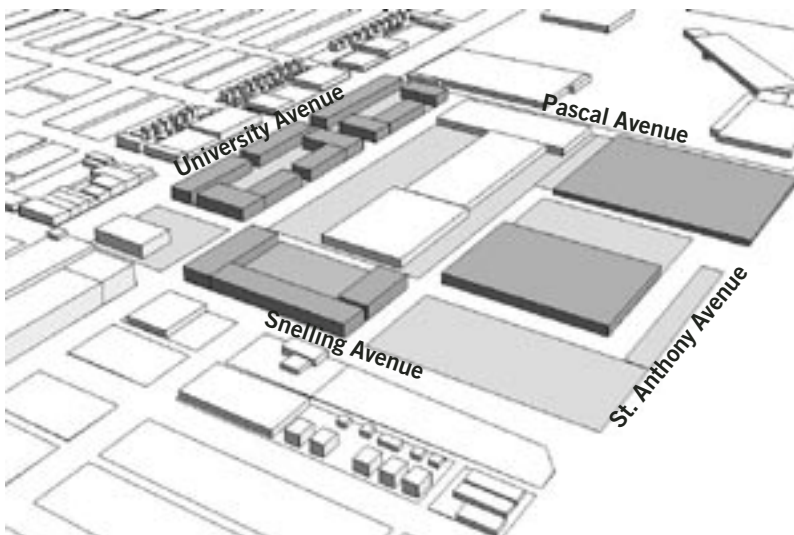
Snelling Area OPTION A



PROPOSED BLOCK PATTERN



PUBLIC REALM DIAGRAM



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS

5.1 OPTION A

This option illustrates the proposed street and block pattern that may flexibly accommodate change and new development over time. Initial street and block phasing is based on an extension of Spruce Tree Drive (east) that sets up a more organized parking and circulation plan. Over time the retail shopping building may be renovated to allow for the new east-west connection alignment and a transit station is shown at the SW corner of University and Pascal. Limited mixed use development is shown and large format retail and the bus maintenance facility are shown adjacent to St. Anthony and the freeway.

Gross Area = 34.5 acres

Proposed ROW = 4.5 acres

Developable Area = 30 acres

Proposed Uses

Commercial retail (large format):
120,000 sf

Mixed use: 115,000 sf

Garage/maintenance: 200,000 sf

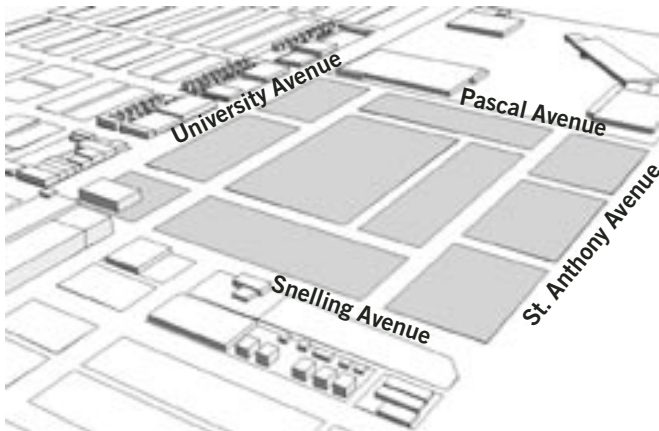
Structured parking: approx. 255
spaces

Transit plaza/station

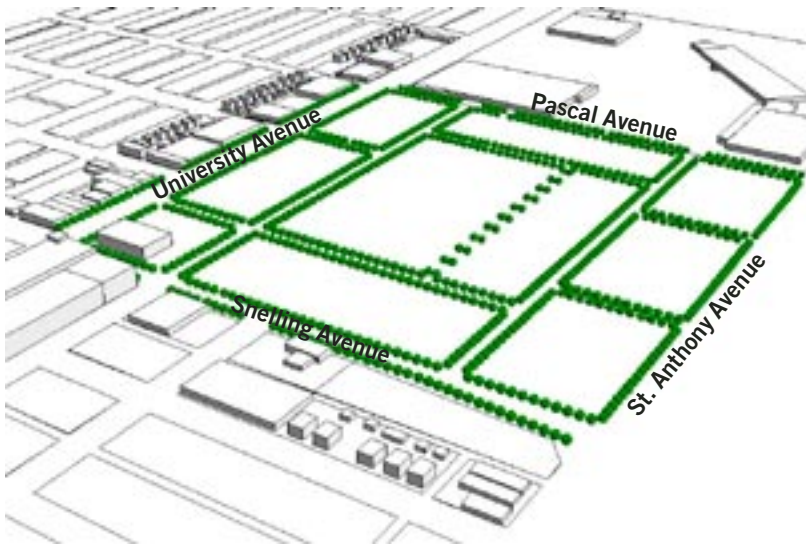
- Reference Frontage Types: 1
- Reference Street Types: B
- Reference Building Types: II



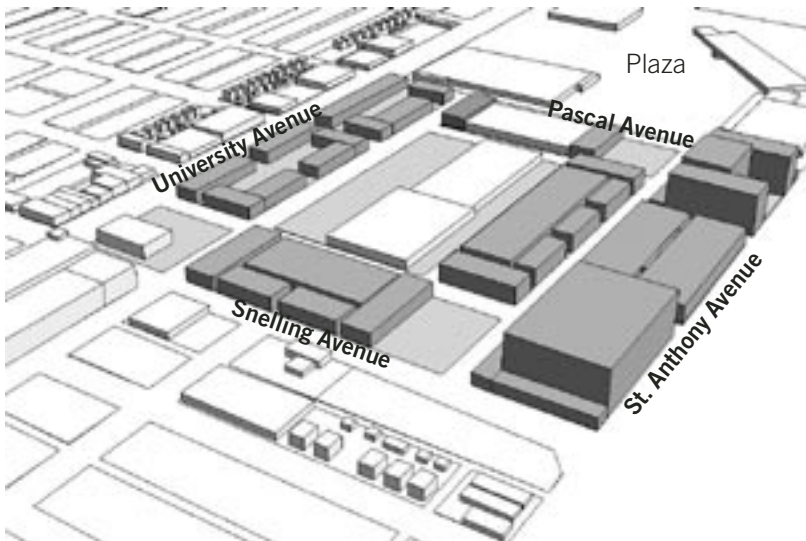
Snelling Area OPTION B



PROPOSED BLOCK PATTERN



PUBLIC REALM DIAGRAM



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS

5.2 OPTION B

If bus garage construction does not occur, another option is phased development with a new major complex along St. Anthony using concepts recommended by the 1998 Midway Center Master Plan (hotel/office/cinema/retail/etc). This option combines a more compact block pattern and could include the idea of a “Lifestyle” center (usually contains at least 50,000 sf of specialty retail, restaurants, and other uses organized as a main street environment).”

Gross Area = 34.5 acres

Proposed ROW = 4.5 acres

Developable Area = 30 acres

Proposed Uses

Restaurant/retail: 40,000 sf

Mixed use: 115,000 sf

Cinema Theatre: 65,000 sf (3600 seats)

Office: 300,000 sf

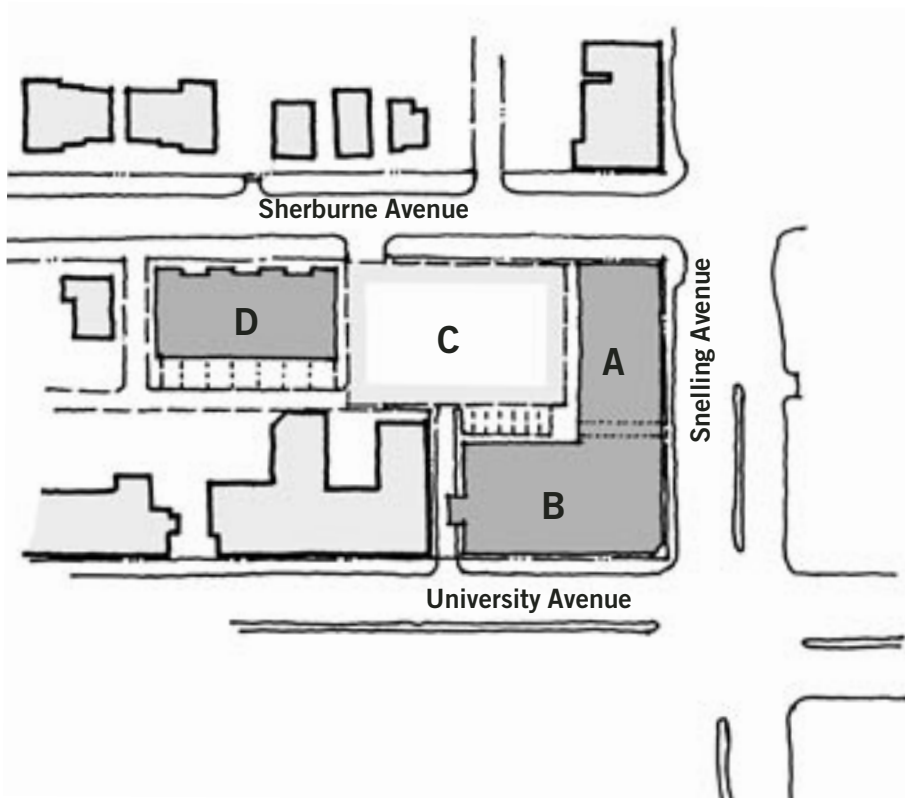
Hotel: 150-200 rooms

Structured parking: approx. 1200 spaces

Transit plaza/station

- Reference Frontage Types: 1
- Reference Street Types: B
- Reference Building Types: II

Northwest Snelling/University ALTERNATIVE



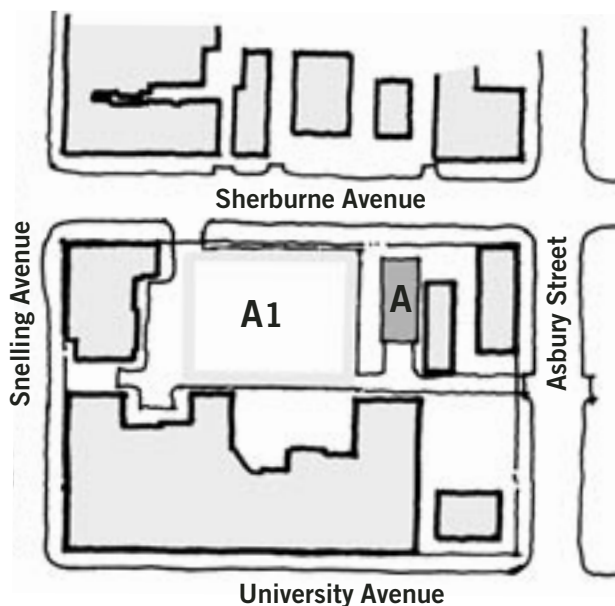
Northwest Snelling/University:

This site includes a bank building on the corner, the furniture store facing Snelling and 7 residential lots on Sherburne. The proposed alternative shows a new two- or three-story building at the corner and is supported by a small two-level ramp. It is anticipated that the structured parking may be used by businesses during the day and accommodate after and late hour businesses at nights and on the weekends. The building facing Snelling would allow for ground floor retail/commercial with one or two floors of apartment units above. The remaining area is shown as for-sale housing.

Proposed Uses:

- A. Ground floor commercial 7,200 sf with one or two levels of apartments above.
- B. Ground floor retail with drive-thru 12,700 sf, second floor office 12,700 sf
- C. Two-level parking ramp (80-100 spaces)
- D. 14 Units for-sale housing

Northeast Snelling/University ALTERNATIVE



Northeast Snelling/University:

This block bounded on the north by Sherburne and the east by Asbury, includes a variety of retail, entertainment and office uses that is in need of more and better organized parking. Consolidating the surface lots on Sherburne into a single shared parking lot is proposed. A small 4-unit residential building is shown at the eastern edge of the proposed lot.

Proposed Uses:

- A. Four-unit apartment building.
- A1. New shared surface parking lot (44 spaces)

6 | Lexington Development Concepts

The Lexington/University intersection concepts address three core issues: the southwest superblock; creating a new library; the northwest (Amoco) and southeast corners. Overall goals for this intersection include:

- Removing blighted properties and redeveloping them soon;
- Intensifying the use of the land as possible;
- Maintaining the high quality parkway environment;
- Improving the public realm;
- Creating smaller blocks consistent with TOD principles, if the market supports this development type;
- Creating paths within the new development for pedestrians moving between buildings and transit stops.
- New development should be designed to be compatible with existing single-family neighborhoods, such as along Central Avenue.

The southwest corner. The overarching goal is the redevelopment of this site. In all the scenarios provided, basic TOD principles are applied (see Section 2.4). No exact breakdown of uses is provided because it will be determined by the market. The purpose of this framework is to set goals for how the area functions, not the exact uses. The options shown remove White Castle in order to demonstrate a TOD approach; however, it is recognized that White Castle may remain as determined by the market. Similarly, since the area is currently zoned B-3 (general commercial) a traditional big box development may occur such as the formerly proposed Home Depot.

A critical issue for all scenarios is parking. The parking required currently is set forth under the zoning for B-3. The scenarios and massing drawn include sufficient parking based on estimates of square footage of commercial space/units of housing.

For the purposes of this study, four options were identified by the task force. They are examples of how TOD principles may be applied. They are not listed in any rank order.

6.1 OPTION - PRIMARILY HOUSING

Option assumes that housing of at least 60 units to the acre is built based on new housing densities built elsewhere in Saint Paul. Additionally, the model assumes primarily commercial uses on the first floor along University Avenue. Housing is more likely to be successful on the first floor along Lexington than University due to the public amenity of the parkway.

6.2 OPTION - MIX OF USES INCLUDING HOUSING

This option suggests capturing the commercial market appeal of locating along the major streets while providing some housing behind. An exact ratio of commercial to housing is not estimated.

6.3 OPTION - SINGLE COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SCENARIO

The intent of this option is to show how a large employer could use this site.

6.4 OPTION - URBAN BIG-BOX MODEL

Based on examples occurring in other cities, it is possible to imagine one of the major chains building one of the newer “urban models.” Typically these are about half the size of the larger big boxes, ranging in size from 40-60,000 sq. ft.

6.5 NW AND SE CORNERS

The **northwest corner** currently has significant vacant land. The primary property owners are Hoa Bien restaurant and BP/Amoco. The general goal is to create a signature building at the corner of University and Lexington that supports the Parkway atmosphere. Community members urged a building of at least 2 stories but no more than 4 to prevent shadows from negatively impacting residential property owners on the north side of the alley.

The **southeast corner** has undergone significant remodeling in the past year. However a parking shortage remains and business turnover is still occurring with some regularity. Additionally the long-term future for Franks Nursery was discussed in light of a new Menards and possible Home Depot in the trade area. Franks was contacted for input but declined to provide any information, thus all assumptions were based on anecdotal information provided by community members. Dairy Queen would like to expand and provide a year round operation, however their land is too small for such a development. In general, the community recommended new development of the site in the future but made no specific recommendations.

6.6 LIBRARY LOCATION OPTIONS

The construction of a new library is a priority for the community and the City. The library needs to remain near the intersection of University and Lexington in order to sustain the partnership with the Hubbs Center and easy access to Central High School. The goal is to build a 40,000 sq. ft. facility which could be built as two stories with 30,000 sq. ft. at street level and 10,000 sq. ft. above. In addition, approximately 30,000 sq. ft. of parking is required. Four possible locations include:

- current site expand east and remove the plasma center (site is too small and would have a parking shortage);
- current site expand west (requires removing some or all of the building where the church, UnBank, and other stores are located);
- northwest corner (requires removing a combination of businesses and homes);
- southwest corner (likely depends upon being part of a mixed use development where the City would partner with a developer). Building could be either stand alone or in a building with other uses including offices, coffee shop, housing, etc.



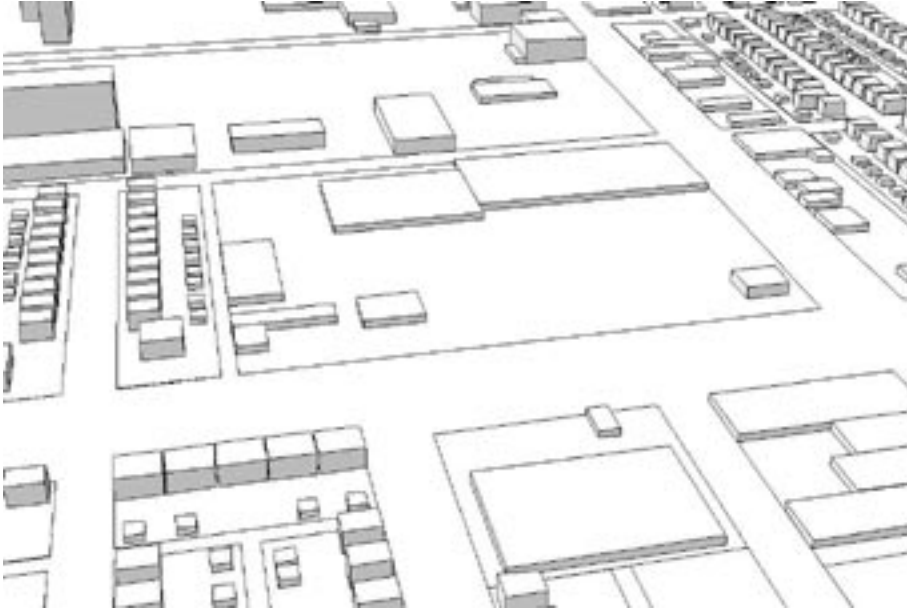
Figure 29. One possibility for the library: as part of a mixed-use development fronting a civic green space.

Clearly all four options are challenging. Due to the lack of a specific proposal to review including possible impacts, this framework makes no site recommendation. However, *community members believe the new facility should have a strong presence on University or Lexington.* There will be further work with the community in the future specific to this project.

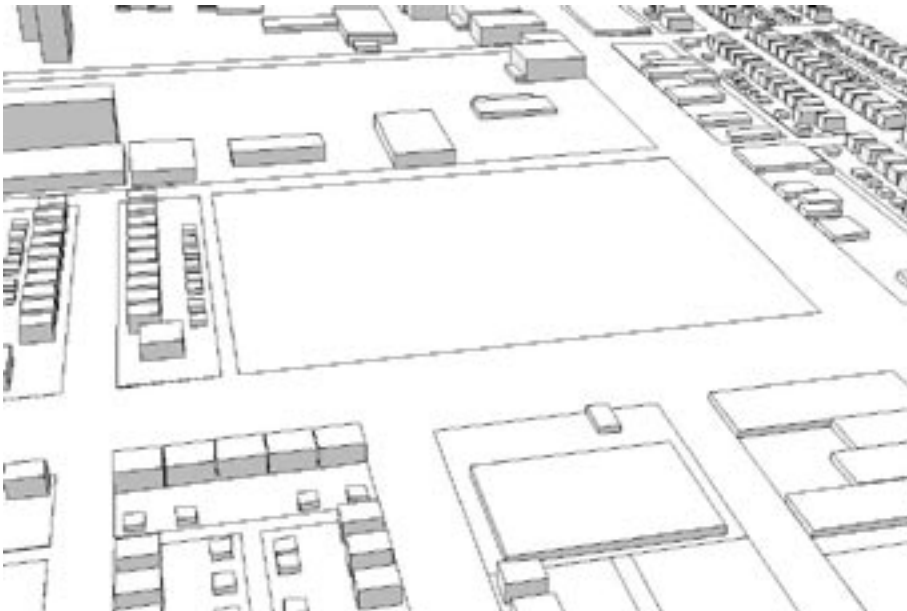
6.7 BLOCKS SOUTH AND WEST OF DUNLAP AND UNIVERSITY

To the west of the vacant southwest superblock at Lexington are two additional superblocks with many businesses properties. These include a series of medical buildings, auto related uses, Bally's gym, and the now vacant 3M building. In general the principles described under Section 6 are applicable here, however should be phased in as appropriate without detrimental impact on vibrant businesses.

Lexington Area EXISTING CONDITIONS



EXISTING BUILDING MASS



EXISTING BLOCK DIAGRAM

Existing Uses:

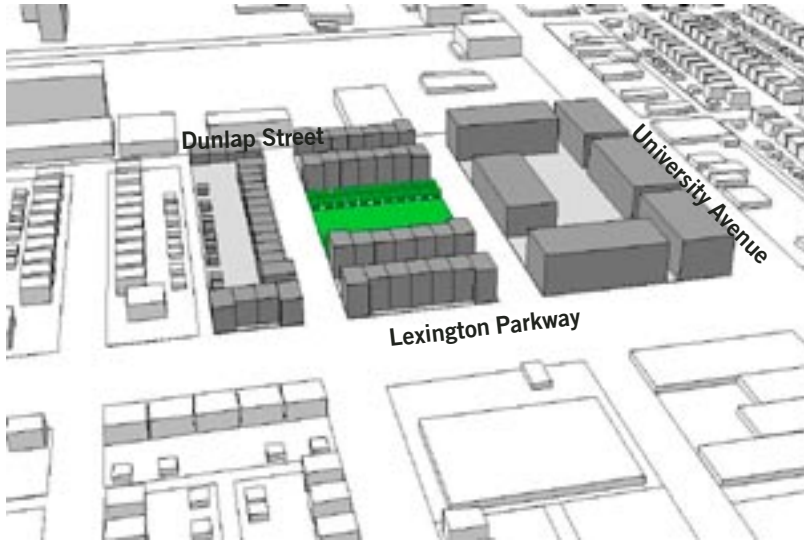
White Castle	3,500
Shopping Center	94,800
Other Uses	22,400

120,700 GSF*
(estimated)

* Gross square feet

Lexington Area

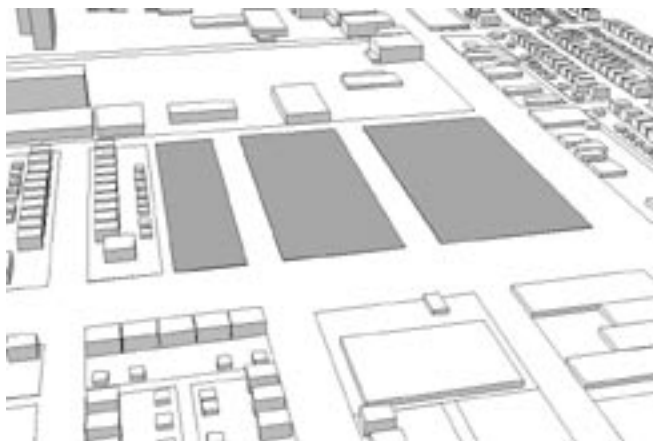
OPTION A



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS



PROPOSED PUBLIC REALM



PROPOSED BLOCK PATTERN

Primarily Housing

Option assumes that housing of at least 60 units to the acre is built based on new housing densities built elsewhere in Saint Paul. Additionally, the model assumes primarily commercial uses on the first floor along University Avenue. Housing is more likely to be successful on the first floor along Lexington than University due to the public amenity of the parkway. This option maximizes residential use on the 9.3 acre development site. A limited amount of retail/commercial is included along University. Parking is mostly accommodated below surface and under building footprints. Buildings are shown as three, four or five stories with the middle block organized around a neighborhood park.

Gross Area = 9.3 acres

Proposed ROW = 1.5 acres

Developable Area = 7.8 acres

Proposed Uses

Residential: approx. 468 units (7.8 acres @ 60 dwelling unit /acre)

Commercial: 3,000-5,000 sf

- Reference Frontage Types: 2, 3
- Reference Street Types: B, C, D
- Reference Bulding Types: II, III

Lexington Area

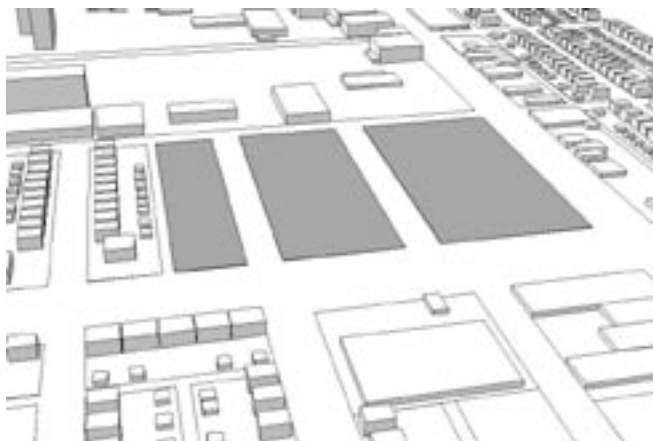
OPTION B



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS



PROPOSED PUBLIC REALM



PROPOSED BLOCK PATTERN

Mix of Uses Including Housing

This option suggests capturing the commercial market appeal of locating along the major streets while providing some housing behind. An exact ratio of commercial to housing is not estimated. This option places a greater emphasis on commercial/retail uses in the mixed use building facing University, while still accommodating as much residential as practical. Parking is under building footprints, on-street and in limited surface lots. The middle block may potentially include a neighborhood park.

Gross Area = 9.3 acres

Proposed ROW = 1.5 acres

Developable Area = 7.8 acres

Proposed Uses

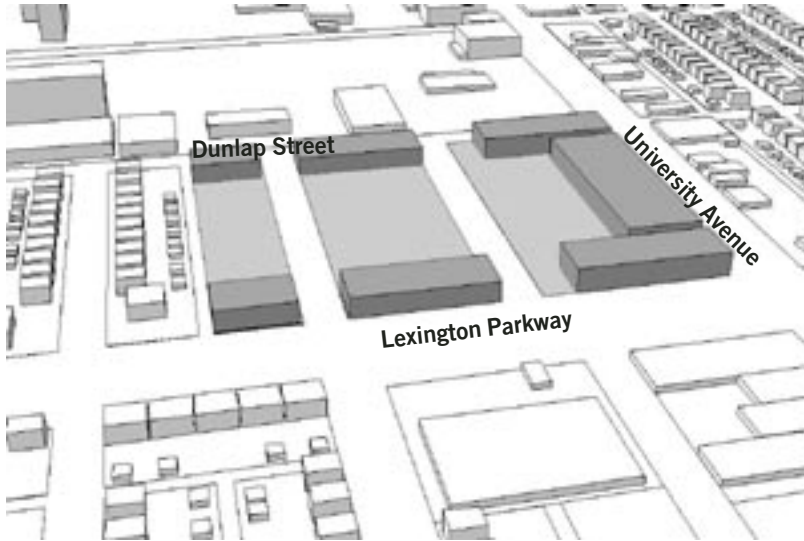
Commercial: 20,000-30,000 sf

Residential: approx. 320-380 units

- Reference Frontage Types: 2, 3
- Reference Street Types: B, C, D
- Reference Building Types: II, III

Lexington Area

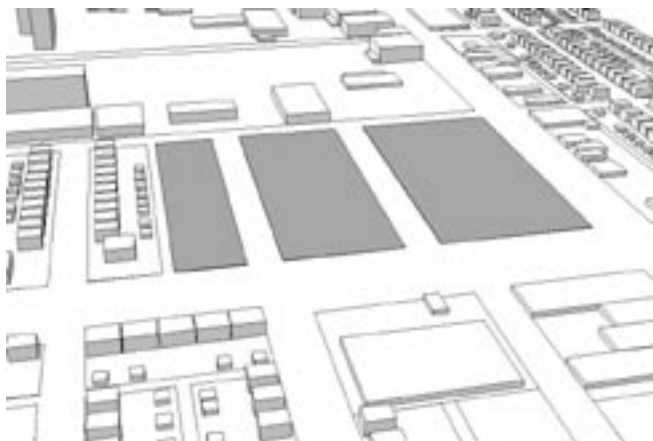
OPTION C



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS



PROPOSED PUBLIC REALM



PROPOSED BLOCK PATTERN

Single Commercial/Office Scenario

The intent of this option is to show how a large employer could use this site. This option dedicates the site to a single use such as a office campus or similar arrangement. The site may accommodate approximately 170,000-180,00 sf of retail uses served by surface parking. Additional square footage may be accommodated with the use of structured parking.

Gross Area = 9.3 acres

Proposed ROW = 1.5 acres

Developable Area = 7.8 acres

Proposed Uses

Commercial: 170-180,000 sf*

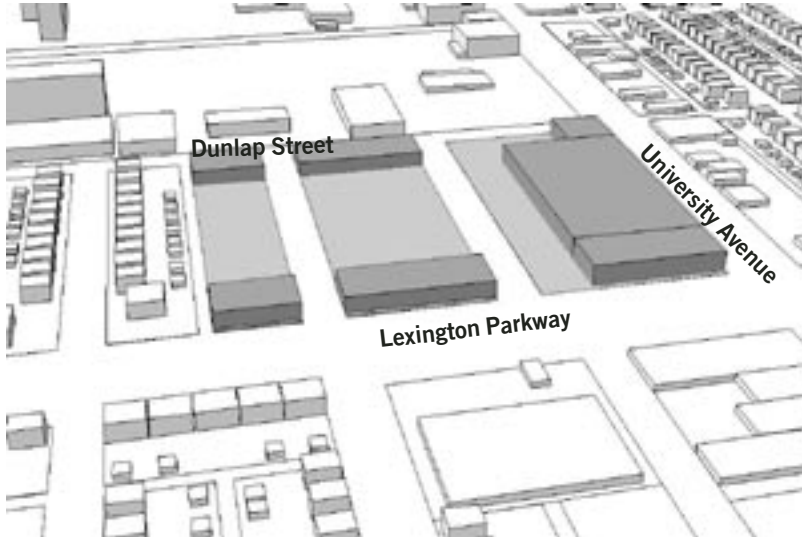
Commercial: 500-540,000sf*

*(surfaced parked at 3/1000)

- Reference Frontage Types: 1
- Reference Street Types: B
- Reference Bulding Types: I

Lexington Area

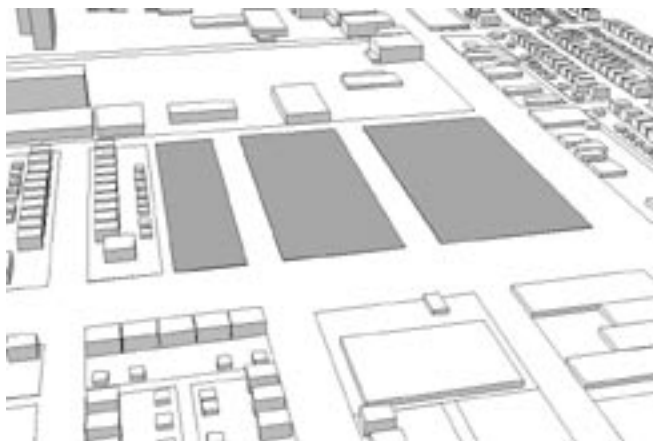
OPTION D



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS



PROPOSED PUBLIC REALM



PROPOSED BLOCK PATTERN

Urban Big-Box Model

Based on examples occurring in other cities, it is possible to imagine one of the major chains building one of the newer “urban models.” Typically these are about half the size of the larger big boxes, ranging in size from 40-60,000 sf. This option is similar to Option C in that it is a single use but includes an large format retail facing University. This urban format would have a floorplate from 40,000 to 60,000 sf arranged in a 2-story configuration. Surface parking would be located internal to the block.

Gross Area = 9.3 acres

Proposed ROW = 1.5 acres

Developable Area = 7.8 acres

Proposed Uses

Commercial Urban Format :

120,000 sf*

Commercial, other: 40-50,000sf*

*(surfaced parked at 3/1000)

- Reference Frontage Types: 1
- Reference Street Types: B
- Reference Building Types: I

7 Blocks Between University and Sherburne

7.1 COMMUNITY GOALS

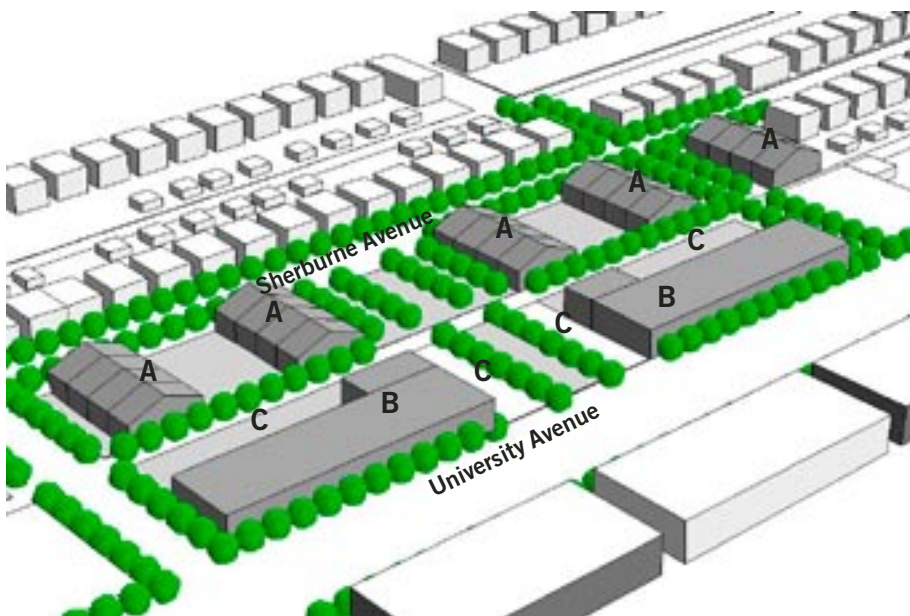
The analysis presented in section 2.1.4 provides the basis for why this planning process sought to address increasing development pressures for these areas. Based on the input gathered at community workshops, letters, emails, phone calls, numerous additional community meetings, interviews with property owners, etc. the following goals were identified. While many residents spoke in opposition at the workshops to any development north of the alley between University and Sherburne, during subsequent meetings and discussions many recognized the pressures for new development and provided constructive input as outlined below. For the study area, most of the impacted area is along Sherburne, though the conditions are similar along much of Aurora. The following goals are intended for new development between Sherburne and University.

1. All new development should continue to support a vibrant residential and commercial environment. New development should maintain if not increase adjacent property values.
2. All new development must create a positive living environment for all residents along Sherburne. Loading docks, trash bins, etc. should be visually and audibly shielded from the residents across the street.
3. New construction heights should be limited as to not create significant shadows on properties to the north. This is to insure sufficient sunlight for melting snow and allowing gardens.
4. New construction should provide ample off-street parking; due to the presence of numerous multi-unit buildings parking is already limited on some blocks.
5. In cases where the alley may be removed or turned to exit onto University or Sherburne, the proposed new building requesting this change must demonstrate sufficient non-alley access to the parcel for its users.
6. Each proposed development must be evaluated on its own individual merit.

University to Sherburne INFILL OPTION

7.2 BUILDING PROTOTYPES

Two examples were drawn that show what these principles could achieve. They are significantly different, but both would uphold the intent of the goals. Numerous other variations could be created. The purpose of showing a drawing is to simply model some ideas. At this time no development proposals of this type are proposed.



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS

This option represents full block redevelopment that locates townhouse type units along Sherburne with gable ends facing the existing residential street. Access to the units is from the side streets. Facing University two, 2-story mixed use buildings are also accessed from the side streets and University. Parking is organized by a landscaped green that accommodates diagonal stalls. Parking is also located behind each building.

Proposed Uses

- A Attached Residential Building
- B Mixed-use Building
- C Parking

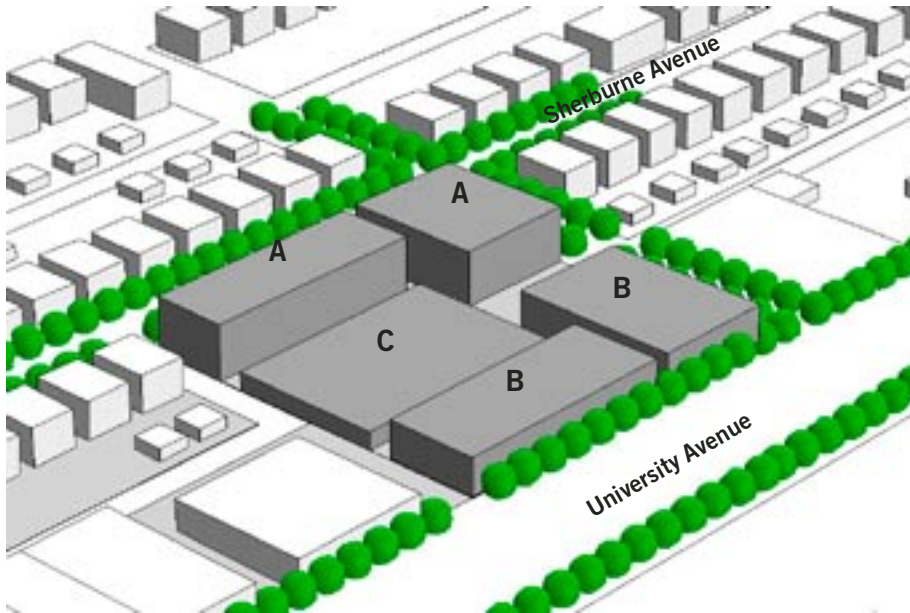
- Reference Frontage Types: 1, 3, 4
- Reference Street Types: B
- Reference Building Types: I, II, IV, V

This option shows a full block depth



Example of Building Type IV

University to Sherburne INFILL OPTION



PROPOSED BUILDING MASS

redevelopment scheme that includes new, attached residential building facing Sherburne and a side street. And a 2-story, mixed use building facing University. Parking is accommodated with a one level structure at mid-block. Access is from the side street. The residential alley is re-connected out to Sherburne, separate from the new development.

Proposed Uses

- A Attached Residential Building
- B Mixed-use Building
- C 2-Level Parking Ramp

Reference Frontage Types: 1, 3, 4

Reference Street Types: B

Reference Building Types: I, II, IV, V



Example of Building Type I

8 Streetscape Guidelines

8.1 GENERAL STREETSCAPE PRINCIPLES

Over the course of 1998-1999 residents and businesses along University Avenue created a set of development principles for the Avenue. These guidelines, known as the *University Avenue Development Principles*, outline goals for enhancing both the type and quality of new development. In general there was in the 1999 Principles and this TOD study a broad agreement that making the avenue look better is a high priority.

In the 1999 Development Principles, numerous sections talk about streetscape and specific components including trees and landscaping, lighting, bus shelters, signs, sidewalks, the fronts of buildings facing the avenue, parking lots, etc. The principles are specific to certain segments of the avenue, separating out the different areas and what is appropriate for each. For example, the capitol area is clearly different from the large shopping center, etc.

This TOD Framework does not include any specific recommendations for streetscape except a general support of all activities that create a hospitable environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and bus riders. The 1999 Development Principles remain in effect as advisory to all new development. They are not adopted and enforced as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan because their creation and approval by all the partners was contingent on not being codified. City staff work with developers to implement the streetscape improvements as development occurs.

8.2 COSTS

The costs of streetscape improvements vary depending on the type. Examples of options include:

- Trees vary in cost based on the age/size of the tree, and the type of planter used
- Pavement materials (brick, pavers, stamped concrete, standard, etc.)
- Lighting (standard, historic, with or without banners/plant hangers)
- Enhanced (i.e. heated) bus stops with quality design

8.3 IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

Streetscape improvements may be implemented in a number of scenarios. These include:

- Project by project changes - primarily when new buildings are constructed. Costs are paid by developer or sometimes through public subsidy.
- Special initiative when property owners get matching grant, typically from City STAR or capitol investment budget funds.
- During major infrastructure improvements, such as LRT or BRT construction. This would provide the most comprehensive opportunity for creating an image.
- Establish a Special Assessment District that provides infrastructure improvements and maintenance as specified by property owners.

9 | Recommendations

The University Avenue TOD Task force, based on input from over 200 stakeholders and significant research, recommends that future development around the University Avenue intersections uphold the goals and intent of Transit Oriented Development as defined within this Framework.

The recommended goals are in four sections: overall, Snelling, Lexington, and Blocks between University and Sherburne/Aurora. Full details are included in the previous sections of this Framework.

Overall Goals (see Section 3.5)

Overarching: Improve and strengthen the Midway area. Maintain and strengthen the established neighborhoods, and local and regional businesses.

1. Increase the volume and variety of housing types, prices, and choices
2. Increase Jobs, Tax Base and Economic Development
3. Create a High Quality of Life: In addition to strong housing and commercial activities, a high quality of life, from a land use and planning perspective, requires places for people. The means to achieve this include:
 - A. Prominent Public Realm
 - B. Clear, Connected Patterns
 - C. Mix of Building Uses and Types

Snelling (see Section 5)

The overall strategies for the Snelling/University Intersection include:

- intensification of commercial uses
- creating clearer patterns of movement for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycles

The Framework identifies opportunities to redevelop the vacant land at Snelling and I-94 to make this a strong gateway for the Midway. Additionally, within the Midway Shopping Center, opportunities exist to create more development and clarify the confusing traffic patterns.

Lexington (see Section 6)

The Lexington/University intersection concepts address three core issues: the southwest superblock; creating a new library; the northwest (Amoco) and southeast corners. Overall goals for this intersection include:

- Removing blighted properties and redeveloping them as soon as possible;
- Intensifying the use of the land as possible.
- Maintaining the high quality parkway environment;
- Improving the public realm;
- Creating smaller blocks consistent with TOD principles, if the market supports this development type;
- Creating paths within the new development for pedestrians moving between buildings and transit stops.

On the **southwest corner**, which is the largest vacant site, the Framework suggests a number of alternatives that could achieve a greater intensity of use. No one option is preferred or recommended.

There is strong support for building a new **library** at this intersection.

Blocks between University and Sherburne (and University and Aurora) (see Section 7)

While no new development is recommended or anticipated in the immediate future, the Framework recognizes growing pressure for development in this area. Additionally there has been long standing support to find solutions to the challenges created by the alley dividing residential and commercial uses. The Framework suggests the following goals of all new development in these blocks.

- All new development should support a vibrant residential and commercial environment. New development should maintain if not increase adjacent property values.
- All new development must create a positive living environment for residents along Sherburne. Loading docks, trash bins, etc. should be visually and audibly shielded from the residents across the street.
- New construction heights should be limited as to not create significant shadows on properties to the north. This is to insure sufficient sunlight for melting snow and allowing gardens.
- New construction should provide ample off-street parking; due to the presence of numerous multi-unit buildings parking is already limited on some blocks.
- In cases where the alley may be removed or turned to exit onto University or Sherburne, the proposed new building type causing this change must demonstrate sufficient non-alley access to the parcel for its users.
- Each proposed development must be evaluated on its own individual merit.

The implementation of the framework is intended to occur as soon as possible recognizing the impact of market forces.

APPENDIX 1

University Avenue TOD Study Task Force Members

University Avenue TOD Task Force: This committee, established by the Saint Paul Planning Commission, is comprised of representatives from key stakeholders in the study area. Members were appointed by their affiliated organization. The role of task force members was to be a liaison to their organization and other stakeholders in their area of geography/interest. The task force had staff support from the City of Saint Paul, community partners, and the HGA consulting team.

Chair: Planning Commissioner Matt Anfang

8-Residential

Joe Ring, St. Anthony Park
Triesta Brown, Hamline Midway Coalition
Steve Samuelson, Thomas-Dale
Nieta Presley, Aurora St.-Anthony
Ken Ford, Lex-Ham
Don Ludeman, Snell-Ham
Mike Madden, Merriam Park
Jim Mogan, University UNITED

8-Business

Zachary Kimble, Chiropractor
Larry Olson, MetroPlains Development
Paula Maccabee, Midway Center
Kou Vang, JB Realty Co. and Hmong Chamber
Toua Xiong, Foodsmart and Hmong Chamber
John Seidel, American (formerly Dakota) Bank
Steve Whitaker, Whitaker Buick
Steve Holupchinski, Impressions, Inc.

Other stakeholders

Brenda Baily, Model Cities
Mat Hollinshead, Transportation Management Organization
Doug Hartford, Concordia University

Non-voting members (elected and appointed officials):

Jerry Blakey, City Council
Jay Benanav, City Council
Lee Pao Xiong, Metropolitan Council
Dan Galles, Metropolitan Council
Sue Haigh, Ramsey County Commission
Janice Rettman, Ramsey County Commission
Representatives Dawkins, Hausman, Entenza, and Paymar
Senators Anderson and Cohen

APPENDIX 2

The University Avenue TOD Framework for Snelling and Lexington had staff support from many partners. These included:

- City of Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development - Joel Spoonheim, Yang Zhang, and Donna Drummond
- University UNITED - Brian McMahon, Russ Stark
- Midway Chamber - Lori Fritts
- Hamline Midway Coalition -Dave Gagne

The consulting team included: Mike Lamb of HGA, Mark Nolan of HGA, Rich McLaughlin, Bob Close of Close Landscape Architecture, Fred Dock of Meyer Mohaddes Associates, Inc., and Peter Musty, CharretteCenter.com.

Funding for this study was provided by the Metropolitan Council Livable Communities Demonstration Account and the City of Saint Paul.

University Avenue Transit-Oriented Development Framework:

SNELLING AND LEXINGTON AREAS
CITY OF SAINT PAUL



APRIL 2003

Prepared By

City of Saint Paul, Minnesota

&

Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc.

With

Close Landscape Architecture

Meyer Mohoddes Associates

Richard McLaughlin

Peter Musty, CharretteCenter.com

April 14, 2003

With funding from the Metropolitan Council Livable Communities
Demonstration Account and the City of Saint Paul.

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